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BLOWING UP INDIA

REMINISCENCES AND REFLECTIONS
OF
A FORMER COMINTERN EMISSARY

PHILIP SPRATT

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PART ONE

I

CLOTHES AND COMMUNISM

One day, at the university, an acquaintance in another college asked me to dinner, and I accepted. I liked him: we both adopted the same down-to-earth pose, equidistant from the aesthetes and the cynics; we revered much the same pantheon—Eliot, Freud, Rivers, Russell, Rutherford.... But I knew without being told that he dressed for dinner, and I did not. When the day came, I failed to show up. I never spoke to him again.

People who have not lived in Europe can hardly realise the importance which the inhabitants of that continent attach to dress. They pay far more attention to externals than Indians do, and they are more concerned with social position: dress is the focus of both interests.

I cannot assert that this small incident was a turning-point in my life. It is the best-remembered of a number of incidents which brought to the surface my feeling that I was out of place in that society.

The fault was, of course, largely mine. I could have asked to be excused. I could have borrowed a dress suit. I could have turned up in my normal clothes and pretended to feel no discomfort. Neither he nor any other guest would have said a word. By that time—a few years after the first world war—there

were hundreds of poor students at the university, and many of them got on perfectly well. The snobbish social hierarchy which made me feel an outcast was to a considerable extent an image of my own creation.

The role of the outcast was one for which my earlier development had fitted me. From the age of 3 or 4 I was notoriously shy and preferred to play alone. I have no idea of the cause of this. At 5 to 7 I fell in love with several girls in my class at school, and had fantasies, sometimes of a compulsive character, and often obscene, about them. Probably this caused guilt feelings which made me more shy than ever.

At my elementary school I was celebrated for the ease with which I could be bullied. At my secondary school I grew fairly strong and acquired some reputation for fighting: no one could bully me now. But I preserved inwardly the attitude of the bullied, towards my parents and towards the masters. I did what was expected of me. I worked and played hard, and refrained from loafing about the streets, smoking and flirting with girls, as most of my schoolfellows did; and inwardly I already felt, in a quite inexpressible way, a misfit. After the age of 7 I never, I think, invited any of my friends to visit my home. I had no friends among girls, and scarcely even spoke to a girl till I was over 20. To take a girl to my home, or to discuss marriage with my parents, was quite beyond possibility; and this was so till I left England at the age of 24.

I do not remember being forbidden to read the *Gem* and the *Magnet*, about which Orwell wrote his amusing essay, "Boys' Weeklies"; and to judge from

what he says there was no reason why I should have been. He represents them as highly moral, in the Boy Scout vein, snobbish and patriotic. But I was so far detached from the life and interests of other boys that I never read an issue of either. At school, though I was a "house captain", I could not be persuaded to make a speech to the house. On the one occasion when I did speak, having to announce that the house-master was leaving, I contrived to say that we were all very pleased about it. I was a diligent student in the sciences and languages, but failed abjectly in those subjects which require any elaborate self-expression: history, literature, and worst of all essay-writing. Instead of an essay I would often send in blank sheets. The inner check on self-exposure was too strong to be conquered, even though it meant failure and a blot on my reputation.

I have never smoked in my life, and have drunk alcohol on very few occasions. Most people compel themselves to get used to these poisons because they feel them essential to social existence. As one who already felt an outcast, I was free to consult my uninhibited physiological horror of them. On two or three occasions I tried to dance, but did not pursue the matter and have never learnt it. This was not only because of shyness, however: I am blind to the beauties of many of the arts, and have never been able to get much pleasure out of jumping about myself or seeing others jump about, whether on the floor or on the stage. Perhaps the clearest evidence of my alienation is the fact that since the period of infantile sexuality I have

never fallen in love with an Englishwoman. The only women I have fallen in love with are Jewish and Indian.

Though my dislike of literary subjects endangered my school career, and so went too far, the direction of my interests was that favoured by my parents and our social group. A friend of my father's caused some little stir by travelling up to see the head of his son's school and making a vehement protest against "wasting the boy's time on a dead language". Another friend remarked that his son was proving a disappointment: he wanted to be a "blithering poet". My people did not fully agree: the classics still had prestige, and the philistine gentleman's remark called forth a dutiful laugh: but they expressed, though with unbecoming crudeness, the trend of ideas which swayed us all.

My father, an elementary schoolmaster, was brought up a Baptist, and there was something of the old straitlaced Nonconformist about him. Hence the sub-articulate hostility to art, and to anything emotional or popular—"vulgar" was the usual word, but it meant not lower-class but unrestrained, like popular music; or new and cranky, like the Boy Scouts. He later joined the Church of England, and it was in an Anglican parish, of the Low Church persuasion, that we received our Christian teaching. We lived in the more middle-class part of the mainly working-class borough of Deptford, in southeast London. Suburban London was somewhat sabbatarian till after the first world war. I was not allowed to ride a bicycle on

Sundays till I was 15 or so. Occasionally my parents took us children to the cinema, but they went alone to a previous show, to assure themselves that it was fit for us. As a result of church sermons, I made silent resolutions to cease bullying my younger brothers, and to cease coveting a boy's air-gun which I had long gazed at in a shop-window. I remembered these vows for years, and I believe they affected my conduct permanently.

My people attended church fairly regularly ; I was a member of the church choir for some time, and I was duly confirmed. But though we were, in a sense, sincere believers, our religion was silent and formal and quite without outward fervour. I was sent to the choir, it was explained, for the sake of the music. There was never any religious teaching at home: we should all have been embarrassed if the subject had been raised. "Grace" before meals, recited when I was quite small, lapsed in a way I cannot now remember before I went to the secondary school. The subject of sex was completely taboo. None of my brothers had a female friend while I was at home. There was an undertone of snobbery, more intellectual or educational than social, and directed specifically against business men as bores who were more prosperous than they deserved to be, and against lawyers as coarse creatures who knew too much of the seamy side of life. On the other hand our charwomen—slum women, some of them actually illiterate, whom my mother employed to help her with the housework—were made to sit at table with the family for lunch. I suppose that the inspiration of this

uncommon democratic gesture was ultimately religious: it certainly was not political.

Politics was never mentioned at home, except in a facetious way at election times, until I began to talk about it myself. I remember "Empire Day" being introduced in the school when I was about 10. The headmaster was probably a sincere enthusiast, but the other masters scarcely concealed their disapproval. I am sure my father shared this coolness towards it: Empire Day was altogether too enthusiastic for him. I became familiar with the contemptuous term "flag-wagging" on this occasion.

By the age of 17 I had a fair knowledge of nineteenth-century physical science, and I read a little on my own in biology. On Sunday evenings after church I used to take a fast walk round the neighbourhood, and for some months on these walks I argued with myself about science and religion. I decided quite definitely that the religious theory of things was unsound. But I remember no "conflict" or emotion over my rejection of religion. I kept it entirely to myself, and I still attended church, and continued to do so till I went to the university.

I had a brother four years older than myself whom I greatly admired, though somewhat from a distance, since he went away to a boarding school when I was 7. He left school to join the army, and was killed at Passchendaele in 1917. It is probable, though I did not realise it at the time, that this shook me to some extent out of the habit of acceptance.

In my last year or two at school, the educational

authorities must have waked up to the dangers of over-specialisation, and we had to go to classes on literature and economics. We despised them, but they opened a few eyes. I was enamoured for some time of the Celtic twilight and G. K. Chesterton, but I soon found Shaw and Ibsen more to my taste, and began to call myself a socialist, though once when challenged I was quite unable to explain what I meant. All I knew was that socialism was something stuffy people disapproved of.

I managed to get a university scholarship, and went up to Downing College, Cambridge, in 1921. The university presented itself to me as a sort of intellectual sea, into which I plunged and tried to swim in all directions at once. My tutor did not bother me, and my parents were far off, so I could read as I pleased. I joined the Union and the Labour Club. I remember meeting and hearing Kanhaiyalal Gauba, who later distinguished himself by writing *Uncle Sham* and being converted to Islam, R. A. Butler, Kingsley Martin, and D. R. Hardman, who was a member of Attlee's administration in 1945. I also joined a private discussion society called the Heretics, which was patronised by many well-known intellectuals. C. K. Ogden was the President, and F. P. Ramsey, I. A. Richards and P. M. S. Blackett often attended. There or at similar groups I heard Russell, Keynes, Lytton Strachey, Lowes Dickinson, Virginia Woolf, Roger Fry, W. H. R. Rivers, Shane Leslie, Philip Guedalla, Caradoc Evans. I attended lectures or courses by Moore, Broad, MacTaggart, J. J. Thomson,

Larmor, Rutherford, C. T. R. Wilson, Aston, Chadwick, and Kapitza.

I had introductions to Christians, and for some time frequented the company of the Student Christian Movement people, mainly Anglicans. I remember meeting Joseph Needham. But they had their own world of thought and their own jargon, and when I hinted at doubt of their assumptions the usual response—there were also humbler ones among them—was a brazen attempt to overawe the sceptic with a display of intellectual superiority. I conjecture that this resort to bullying was due to their own inner doubts. Whatever the cause, the Christians were the most snobbish among the groups I became at all intimate with.

There was little snobbery, social or intellectual, among the science men. Many of them had come up with scholarships, and they tended to take their tone from Rutherford, Hopkins and Haldane, all three then at the height of their fame, and all very unpretentious in their personal behaviour. But I was in no mood to devote myself to my proper studies, or to associate with the dull dogs who stuck to theirs. I dabbled in literature and philosophy and psychology and anthropology. But to associate with the men who knew these subjects was quite another matter. I was not completely tongue-tied. I remember protesting to Virginia Woolf—probably at the Heretics—that Eliot was not so obscure as she seemed to think, and asking Eddington how he could say that absolute direction is meaningless, in view of what happens to rotating bodies. (I could

not understand his answer, and was too shy to pursue the matter). But these comparatively bold gestures were made in meetings. More ordinary social relations were, obscurely, far more difficult.

Nobody was clearly aware of it, but others felt somewhat as I did. A man from my school, a better scholar than I and a very hardworking type, went up with a high reputation and every prospect of a brilliant career. He made no friends, became very disgruntled, and at the end of his second term went down for good. He said he "could not stand the strain". I also made the acquaintance of a Jew from City College, New York, who had come up with a post-graduate studentship. He obviously felt isolated and socially inferior. At first his behaviour was obstreperous. He claimed that he was the only person who knew what Spinoza really meant, and he denounced Russell, Moore, Eddington, Rutherford, etc., as fools. Once, without any provocation, he made quite a scene in a meeting addressed by Laski. Finally he had a nervous breakdown, tearing his books to pieces and throwing them about the room. He went home without completing his course.

Alienation is no new thing. It has been known since civilisation began, though it is probably at its worst in our dull, irreligious, competitive bourgeois society. But ours differs from previous ages in possessing a world-wide institution which systematically gathers in and feeds on the alienated from orthodox society. One of my two friends never thought of it. The other flirted with it for a time but finally rejected

it and became a non-political professor of philosophy. I allowed myself to be gathered in to the communist fold.

II

IN THE BRITISH COMMUNIST PARTY

T. A. Jackson, a prominent London communist whom I met later, once said in my presence: "The scientists can explain all sorts of wonderful things, but we can go one better: we can explain *them*." Those who have discussed the Marxian theory and its charm for the young have not stressed sufficiently the sense of superiority it gives its devotees. To Marx non-believers were "philistines", to Engels "fools". Oppressed by my fear of social and intellectual failure, I grasped what was presented to me as the master-key to all knowledge. Marxism has, in fact, interesting things to say on many subjects, and these things were just dawning upon the academic consciousness in western Europe. The convert to Marx felt that he was in the vanguard of intellectual progress.

But as all students of the subject have remarked, the convert's most important gain is a purpose in life. To go up to the university merely to prepare oneself for a humdrum career was a bore: more than a bore, it was ignoble. Almost all my fellow-students would have agreed, though in fact that is what almost all of them were there for. But now, at least, I was not. I had a far greater purpose than that. Henceforth I should concern myself with something more important than earning a living, more important than physics, or

anthropology, or art : I had devoted myself to the salvation of humanity.

Neither I nor any of my party friends would have indulged in such grandiloquence, but that is what we thought. We were devoted to the salvation of humanity. What impels a young man towards the communist party is largely negative : discontent, resentment, envy. What keeps him going when he has become a regular member is also negative : hatred and contempt, and perhaps also ambition. But what carries him through his change of life is idealism.

The communist sees modern society as doomed to decline through war, colonial discontent and economic dislocation. All these he believes are due to profit-making. There is no other important cause of human suffering. But capitalism is essentially profit-making. These evils, then, cannot be removed while capitalism persists. Therefore all that is needed is to overthrow capitalism, and salvation, utopia, follows automatically.

This theory had prevailed among Continental socialists since Marx, and had had some adherents even in Britain. Until the Russian Revolution the prospect of "overthrowing capitalism" seemed remote, but buoyed up by the prestige of the Master, Marxists were confident that it would happen somehow, and were not unduly worried about how to do it. Indeed in Britain there was more discussion as to what to do afterwards, between the supporters of state socialism and the syndicalists or guild socialists, who wanted direct workers' control of industry, than between the two great schools of thought on the problem of how to

overthrow capitalism, the reformists and the revolutionaries.

The Russian Revolution was widely taken as deciding both disputes, against the syndicalists in favour of state socialism, and against the reformists in favour of revolution. Syndicalism has in fact lost greatly in strength, while for some years reformism was on the defensive, at least on the Continent. In Britain the small revolutionary groups, syndicalist and political, came together in 1919 and 20 to form the Communist Party of Great Britain, which eventually secured affiliation to the Communist International (Comintern).

Though affiliated, however, the British party was an unusual communist party in several respects. Before 1917 the chances of revolution in Britain were completely negligible, so that the small revolutionary groups were made up of honest cranks rather than political careerists. Some of them were, nevertheless, men of considerable gifts, and many were strongly marked characters. The Russians purged such men at sight from the Continental parties, but for some reason allowed them to die out peacefully in the British party, which thus retained something of its pre-Lenin character well into the Stalin era. The British party also enjoyed the distinction, strangely rare in the Comintern, of being genuinely proletarian in membership and even in leadership. The leading groups almost everywhere, including Russia, were and are from the intellectual class. But the true nature of the communist movement eventually showed itself in

Britain too. In the thirties the communist party had a wide influence and a considerable membership among the intelligentsia and the professional class, and in fact retains this influence, in a somewhat diluted form. In the twenties, though there was as yet little organised effort to obtain middle-class supporters, they began to collect round the party spontaneously.

There were very few communists in the university in my time. I knew Maurice Dobb, J. D. Bernal, Ivor Montagu, Allen Hutt, A. L. Bacharach, Barnett Woolf, the late Michael Roberts, and three or four others who are less well-known. We were not a group: except one or two of these we seldom met. But they fed my superiority when we did. We few were in *The Movement*.

Dobb is, I think, the only communist among the academic economists in Britain—oddly enough, there are not many communist economists anywhere. Bernal's scientific colleagues include quite a number who are in or very near the party, but of them all he is the most assiduous and authoritative spokesman of the party line. Ivor Montagu is an Honourable, a younger son of a financial magnate who had been made baron or viscount. He read biology, mainly, it was said, out of admiration of L. T. Hogben, not because he was much concerned to work. Apart from communism his interests were in films and table tennis. He has, I believe, done distinguished work in films, and some years ago he visited India as president of the international table tennis organisation. He won fame as an undergraduate by speaking in the Union

against his uncle, who was then Secretary of State for India.

Allen Hutt is a historian, who has written on the history of the labour movement and so forth. He went in for party journalism, and so far as I know is still at it. A. L. Bacharach is a bio-chemist. He joined the firm of Glaxo, and I believe is still with them. He had highly fancy tastes in tobacco, I remember, and he has since written books on music. Woolf, a poor East End Jew, born in the communist movement, made a surprising career for himself in university science. He is a bacteriologist. Dobb told me he suspected Michael Roberts of being a fascist spy. Roberts must have dropped out of the party fairly soon. Later he edited anthologies and so forth, and wrote several books, some of which I read with pleasure without recognising the author's identity. It was not till his death, about 1950, when I saw his photograph, that I realised that the distinguished writer Michael Roberts was the man I had known.

Woolf, Roberts, and one or two others, including myself, would sell the *Worker's Weekly* to the railway-men at the town railway station, or canvass the working-class areas of Cambridge. Our success was very slight. We also tried spasmodically to interest Indian students, with broadly the same result. The party had not yet begun its assault upon the universities. In fact the only person who ever asked me to join the party was a working-class member who lived in Cambridge town. This man once invited a number of us to his house for the evening. We liked his tea, but then he

began to tinkle on the piano and sing—he fancied his voice—popular songs dripping with the oiliest sentimentality. We could pretend to ignore the class barrier set up by wealth, but this barrier showed working-class and middle-class communists arrayed on opposite sides just as surely.

This was the period, a few years after the first world war, when the patriotic effervescence and the post-war economic boom had died down, the secret treaties and the false propaganda had been exposed, and the reputations of the statesmen and soldiers of the war had fallen to their proper levels, and below. Confused but unpleasant news came from Ireland, India and South Africa. A million unemployed had already become a permanent thing. Baldwin looked like perpetuating stagnation for twenty years, and when MacDonald replaced him he did nothing to change the prospect. Ambitious young men were feeling stifled.

It was an appropriately cynical background to the complete ethical nihilism which prevailed—in theory—among the more intellectually fashionable undergraduates. I accepted this doctrine for some time, as did all the communist intellectuals I knew. Ethics were regarded as pure delusion. There was no foundation for any belief in value or obligation: the only exception we might have allowed was aesthetic value. Yet we gloried secretly in accepting the values and undertaking the obligations of communists.

Eliot's early poems were published when I was an undergraduate. Though, despite my boast, I did not

understand them, they made an immense impression on me—

What is the city over the mountains
Cracks and reforms and bursts in the violet air
Falling towers
Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London. . .
My house is a decayed house
And the jew squats on the window sill, the
owner. . .

I could detect slighting references, in the Ezra Pound manner, to the "money power", and it was clear that throughout the poems Eliot was sneering at the emptiness of middle-class existence—I have measured out my life with coffee spoons. On the other hand I read the references to urban squalor as friendly. They gave me a feeling that the working-class parts of towns had an aura, a virtue, that middle-class areas lacked. Eliot has never been considered a proletarian poet. He is a crocodile, if not a hyena. But he helped to make one communist, at least.

Various lines of thought can lead a young man to espouse social revolution. I felt most acutely a dislike of social inequality. That Lenin treated everybody as of equal consequence was his greatest attraction. The strongest impression I received from the events of the time and from reading in recent history was a sense of the moral degradation of the political and economic system. Lenin insisted on this point, too, and instructed the communist press, as a main line of work, to conduct exposures of capitalist scandals.

Nobody ever made clear why an ethical nihilist should find anything objectionable in scandals. I felt the inconsistency dimly, but accepted it as an instance of Lenin's machiavellism: the masses still cherish these obsolete moral prejudices, so why not make use of them? It was not till long afterwards that I realised the radical incoherence in the Marxian ethical theory.

I read fairly widely in the Marxian classics and the material from Russia, which at that time was still stimulating. Marx's short historical books, and *My Reminiscences of the Russian Revolution*, by M. Phillips Price, are those I remember best. The men I knew took the doctrine seriously but not religiously: they put their own interpretation on a good many things. There was a certain conscious intellectual superiority in this: they knew it was not orthodox. I did the same, and continued to do so even when, later, I attended party classes in London. I remember feeling a faint shock when I first met a well-instructed working-class communist. His dogmatic confidence in the Marxian formulae still seemed absurd to me. One evening at the Union—under R. A. Butler's auspices, I think—we had a young working-class orator. I confess that when he began talking about the Hegelian dialectic I joined in the laughter. I was also shocked when I heard a communist intellectual discussing the diffusion of culture. "We reject it, of course," she said. "We stand for independent origination." That is not a scientific attitude, I thought. But in the latitudinarian atmosphere of British communism in those days one could still adhere to my attitude, while realising that

hers was the more official and "correct". I left England too early to acquire the fully religious sense about Marxism.

But I picked up a feeling for Lenin which had an almost religious tone. Prince D. S. Mirsky, a brilliant writer who was converted to communism while in exile in England, records that the personality of Lenin, as revealed in his collected works, was the magnet which drew him. (Poor man : he went back to Russia in the thirties, and after being heard of occasionally for some time, vanished for ever.) Lenin fitted the part of a god on earth. He had, apparently, never made a false move. He strode with supreme self-confidence from total insignificance to total power in a little over twenty years. He remained personally uncorrupted, modest and friendly, and yet had the guts to order the terror—this was, perhaps, without my being aware of it, the most convincing proof of his divinity. His death moved me greatly. I had already considered myself a communist for some time, and soon after it I decided to join the party.

In its first years the British party had contained a number of intellectuals of some distinction—Sylvia Pankhurst, W. N. Ewer, R. W. Postgate, W. T. Goode, Ellen Wilkinson—together with a crowd of sandal-wearers, all-wool fanatics, anti-vaccinationists and so forth of the type which gathered round the pre-1914 socialist movement. But the new Leninist ideas did not suit these miscellaneous reformers and humanitarians. Lenin's early works were now being published in English, and I remember a sudden enlightenment

and tough exhilaration when I grasped the idea of the party: whole-time, professional, dedicated, under military discipline, with but one goal—power. By the time I joined most of the intellectuals and cranks had dropped out, and the party was left with a small hard core of professionals at the top, some ambitious young trade unionists, and a few thousand unemployed workers at the bottom.

The party branch in my London borough was almost entirely unemployed. The "bolshevisation" of the parties was just beginning then. This involved a change of organisation from the traditional territorial branch, suited to electoral work, to the factory group, suited to the struggle for power. We formed one or two factory groups, but the members resisted it, since it increased the risk of victimisation for those who were in employment, and destroyed the branch as a social centre for those who were not. The branch was, in fact, completely futile, and, though I would not have admitted it, quite uncongenial to me. I spent most of my time, after I went down, at the Labour Research department. This was an information office on economic subjects maintained by a number of trade unions, but it had been infiltrated by communists, who combined with their accurate and useful information a certain amount of discreet propaganda. The staff included some interesting people, and working there I experienced for the first time in my life a pleasant intimacy with a like-minded group.

At the Labour Research Department the junior staff and voluntary workers used to meet for lunch in

the typists' room, and other people in the "movement" of similar age would drop in. Two fairly frequent visitors were a young man named Upadhyaya, engaged in organising Indian seamen, and Sadie Span, a Jewess from Glasgow. She was a proletarian, but exceedingly learned in Marxist lore, a good speaker with a strong Scots accent, and highly regarded in the party. She had spent some time undergoing instruction in Moscow—a distinction much like "England-returned", only more so. She was thus by far the most important communist of us all. But she would not sit down to lunch with Upadhyaya. She said he gave her the creeps. The Brahmin out-Brahmined, and by a slum-bred Jewess! Whatever we may have felt, all of us middle-class communists, and some non-communists, knew better than to admit such a feeling. Those were the days, of course, before the Comintern had begun to stress the race, colour and colonial questions.

Sadie conducted study-classes, which I attended, and she rebuked me for my lack of orthodoxy. She was plain, but a vigorous personality, with a caustic tongue. I fell mildly in love with her, and composed a sonnet to her, but never had the courage to reveal either fact. I have never heard of her since I left England. I have heard Upadhyaya mentioned, but have never seen him again, and do not know if he ever returned to the land of his birth.

In London I met a number of leading members of the party. Most of them behaved in an informal and friendly way. Pollitt, then coming to the front,

was quite cordial, as were Murphy, MacManus, Jackson, Arnot and Elinor Burns. I felt Emile Burns to be unpleasantly superior. I knew Clemens Dutt fairly well. I never saw his more famous younger brother, Palme Dutt, though I read all his writings and admired his brilliant style. These brothers, some years older than myself, were sons of a Bengali doctor and his Scandinavian wife. They and their sister, then working in the League of Nations, had been born and brought up in England. Palme Dutt made a name as a student politician at Oxford during the first world war, and the two brothers were members of the party from the start. Clemens wrote little and was unknown to the public. I understood that he did important work behind the scenes. Later I realised that that work was communising the Empire. Palme Dutt was already very prominent, though he had not yet acquired the controlling position in the party that he later attained. Many years later M. N. Roy, who had known Dutt well and admired him, explained to me the paradox of the dog-like loyalty to the Comintern of this able and forceful man. The key to the puzzle was Mrs. Dutt. She is a Finn, and was extremely beautiful in her younger days. Dutt is completely dependent on her: Roy assured me that when he knew them, Dutt never published an article of importance unless she had certified its orthodoxy. Roy did not say so directly, but he led me to infer that she is a member of the highly secret inner organisation of the Comintern which Gitlow has described in *The Whole of Their Lives*, desertion from which is always punished by death.

One night I was taken rather stealthily to a big house in a suburban part of London and introduced to a warm and noisy roomful of Continental communists. I did not notice any suspicion in their attitude, but I thought their behaviour painfully uncomradely: they completely ignored me. The British party still preserved something of the democratic atmosphere of the old socialist movement. The Continental parties had, I think, already lost it and become rigidly disciplined and hierarchical. I gather that the British party followed their example in later years. The Continental parties had long repudiated bourgeois sex ethics, not only in theory but in practice. The British party did so in theory, but I heard little of practice following precept, as I believe it did later.

Through a purely nominal connection with Birkbeck College—I had put my name down, in good faith, for a course, but actually attended only one lecture and did not pay the fee—I considered myself entitled to join the London University Labour Party, and I attended a few meetings as one of its communist fraction. There I met Freda Utley, who was then its chairman, and, as I understood, a secret communist. I learnt much later from her books that she went to Russia soon after this, and married a Russian. He was not a party member, but was a fairly important official in an economic ministry, and a faithful supporter of the Government. He was purged in the thirties and sent to an arctic labour camp, where he must have died—she was never informed. I also knew Rose Cohen, a lively young woman, who went to Russia and

married there, but was foolish enough to become a Russian citizen. She was herself purged and died in a camp.

I was in London during the General Strike of 1926. This event made a great stir at the time, but has faded into relative insignificance with the new ideas on industrial relations which began to prevail in the later twenties. The dispute was about the coal industry. The market for coal had declined, some of the mines were approaching exhaustion, many of the firms were small and could not afford technical improvements. The way out, adopted twenty years later, was nationalisation, but at that time the Conservative government disliked the principle and shirked the responsibility and the expense. The miners, supported by the other organised workers, stuck to their position, and the owners, supported by the other industrialists, to theirs. It was class against class—but the dispute was confined to this question and did not become a political quarrel. At length the Trade Union Congress called a sympathetic general strike, but after a week, being persuaded that they had acted illegally, and seeing no way out unless they were prepared to lead a revolution, they sent their men back to work. The miners remained on strike for several months, but were defeated in the end.

The party at first thought a revolution was coming. The members rallied round hastily, getting out bulletins, and so forth. I received bundles of bulletins from the London District Committee and sold them in the streets in my neighbourhood. One or two local

members, who fancied themselves as speakers, tried to get up meetings, but failed. I took part in a strikers' cricket match, and in the next branch meeting one of the members attacked me for such un-class-conscious behaviour. During the strike we chattered excitedly among ourselves, repeating that either the government would be forced to resign or the strike would fail. This remark however was received very coolly outside our own ranks. Even within our ranks the sentiment was purely theoretical. There was in fact no will to revolution, and this was true of the ordinary party members too. In my neighbourhood there was scarcely a scuffle in the streets, and I think there were no arrests. It was a most emphatic demonstration against revolution, but somehow we managed to ignore that fact.

During my time in the British party I heard nothing of internal dissensions. I was to hear something of them when I had left England. I was totally unaware of any conflict between the British party and anybody else over the control of the Indian party. I was to hear much gossip on this subject in India. There were but faint echoes in Britain of the most violent dissensions abroad. The campaign against Trotsky had begun, of course, and sage whispers were already to be heard that Stalin was the coming man, but this was not yet generally realised. I remember buying a book of 500 pages or so on Trotskyism which the British party had dutifully published. I was fairly well up in the phrasology by this time, but I found this discussion quite impenetrable. I accepted it that

Trotsky had committed some apparently slight but really fatal theoretical error, which in time, no doubt, I should be able to understand.

There was some stir when Zinoviev was removed from the chairmanship of the Comintern. To the uninitiated he had been a great hero, who had shared Lenin's exile and had collaborated with him in a book. Now the people in the know remarked that it was awful to think that such a contemptible person had ever been the leader of the Communist International. I remember, too, the flurry when Ruth Fischer, who had just been removed from the leadership of the German party, visited Britain to canvass support. I gathered that the British leaders, doubtless quite ignorant of the subjects in dispute, but stolidly loyal to the Comintern, gave her no countenance.

Those were the days before the Comintern was completely Stalinised ; since about 1928 there has never been any open opposition or serious discussion inside it. All the parties have behaved as the British party did then, with the same consciousness of their dependence on Russia. But despite that, these parties are not necessarily unimportant. The British party is usually treated as negligible, but in fact, through its followers in the unions and its intellectual sympathisers, it has considerable influence. It has shown in several recent cases its danger as an agent of espionage, and of course it could sabotage if ordered to do so. Especially since the Nazis destroyed the German party and seamen's union, the British party has taken a considerable part in organising the communist control of inter-

national communications through the seamen and dockers. Most important of all, perhaps, is the work of the British party in spreading communism in the colonies.

But of all this I knew substantially nothing at that time. The middle 1920s were indeed a quiet period, and my brief and merely peripheral experience in the British party was all too slight a training for one who was soon to blossom forth as an expert on communism. But it was not as an expert that I was sent to India. I was chosen because I was unknown to the police, and my job was to be that of a messenger and reporter. Clemens Dutt asked me if I would care to go. He said it was planned that I should undertake no public work in India, and that I should return within six months, but there was of course a certain risk, and he gave me a few days to answer. It did not take me long to decide. I was 24, with no ties, and in the full flood of enthusiasm for the cause. I jumped at it.

My principal messages were that the Communist Party of India should launch a Workers' and Peasants' Party as a legal cover, and that members should get into the trade unions and obtain the leadership of them. I was furnished with some cover addresses, codes, and the names of all the Indian communists they knew—S. V. Ghate, Muzaffar Ahmad, Krishnaswami Iyengar, and Janki Prasad Begerhotta, if I remember rightly. I hastily read up two or three books for background, fixing firmly in my mind that Bombay is on the West coast and Madras on the east, not vice versa. A few days before my departure I was conducted with much

secrecy to meet the Comintern representative in London, a Russian named, as I afterwards learnt, Petrovsky. He was executed in the purge about ten years later. All he said was that I should write a pamphlet on China, urging India to follow the example of the Kuomintang. Early in December, 1926, Clemens Dutt took me to Paris. There I met an Indian Muslim whose name was given in the Meerut case as Sepassi, and after two or three days of waiting about in deserted cafes, I left by the train for Marseilles on my own. There I boarded the P. and O. liner *Kaisar-i-Hind* for Bombay.

III

OFF TO INDIA

The gorgeous East! Dutt had warned me that under imperialism sanitation was terrible, and I must be very careful about infection. I did not then know that sanitation was an invention of the middle nineteenth century and had been imposed on India from about 1870. I began very timorously, and it was some weeks before I felt at ease in a tram or teashop, or anywhere beyond the Fort of Bombay. Dutt had warned me also not to take the Indian bourgeoisie too seriously: they were just putting up a show of opposition to deceive the masses. I was a little surprised when I began to read the *Bombay Chronicle* and the *Indian National Herald*, which Horniman had recently started in Bombay after leaving the *Chronicle*. Though their nationalism might be bourgeois, there was not much I could teach them about imperialism.

Two British communists had come to India before me. (I think I remember hearing that there had been a third, but I can recall nothing about him). I had met one of them casually in London. He was an engineering worker named Glading, who had come about 1925 and returned shortly without making any contacts. (Years later, about 1938, when working in Woolwich Arsenal, he was detected in espionage for Russia and sent to prison.) Another I now met in

Bombay. He was a Scottish coalminer named George Allison, who had been sent direct by the Red International of Labour Unions to ginger up the Indian labour movement. I have met few more attractive men in my life. He had been injured in a mine accident and was somewhat embittered, and he was aggressively proletarian and contemptuous of middle-class communists and trade union leaders. Yet he was a keen admirer of Robert Louis Stevenson, he could be a gay companion, and he was a born leader. He told me a good deal about the internal working of the British party, which turned out to be less ideal than I had pictured it. Even in a party which had existed for only four years, a bureaucracy had established itself, against which the truly working-class members, such as Allison, felt considerable hostility. His account of Moscow, where he had lived for some time in 1924, was however idealistic: a story of material hardship but high revolutionary enthusiasm. There was only one discordant note: he told me of a British communist who had been discovered to be a police spy. He was lured to Moscow and shot. Even then I could not help thinking that such treatment was a bit drastic, in peace time. I did not think to ask what proof they had against him. Allison was arrested about this time on the charge of entering India with a forged passport. He was sentenced to eighteen months imprisonment, and at the end of it was deported.

I had noted the addresses of my prospective Indian contacts so cryptically that I should never have been able to make them out. Luckily on my second or

third day in Bombay I saw in Taraporevala's a pamphlet: *Hundred Percent Indian*, by C. G. Shah. Dutt had mentioned this name, and the pamphlet gave me his address. I soon met him, and we became, and remain, very good friends. *Hundred Percent Indian* is a Marxist attack on Gandhi. Shah is a Jain from Kathiawad, in whom familiarity, powerfully aided by Marxism, had bred a deep contempt for the Mahatma. He was considered, rightly, the most learned Marxist in Bombay, and was in everything but revolutionary activity an orthodox communist. He changed his opinions a good deal later. When I last met him he remarked what a terrible Leviathan the Stalinist state had become, and he made solemn and regretful references to Gandhi. Though he never joined the party, he was at this time very close to it, and he introduced me to all the members and sympathisers in Bombay.

Communist activity in India dates from 1922, when, doubtless stimulated by M. N. Roy's propaganda, Dange began an English weekly, *Socialist*, in Bombay, and Muzaffar Ahmad a Bengali weekly, *Langal*, in Calcutta. About the same time the late Singaravelu Chetty in Madras became a communist, and he used to recall that he was the first person to address the A. I. C. C. as "comrades". That was in 1923. They formed no party, but they corresponded among themselves and with Roy, and received money from him. Singaravelu, already old and sick, was left out, but the others were arrested and tried in the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case in 1924, together with

Nalini Gupta, a courier, and Shaukat Usmani, a muhajir.

The muhajirin were Muslims who had left India in 1919, during the Afghan War, because they considered it improper, as in Islamic law it is, to obey a non-Muslim government which was at war with a Muslim government. Some of them wandered through Afghanistan into Turkestan, and were indoctrinated by M. N. Roy at Tashkent. On their return they had had to spend a year or two in jail on passport charges, and had then been released. They told me that one of their group had smuggled into India a large sum of money—they said Rs. 60,000—for party work, but he had used it all to build himself a house. I see no reason to disbelieve this story. I met eight or ten of them, but only two are still active members, so far as I know—Fazl-i-Ilahi Qurban and Firozdin Mansur of the Pakistan party. Qurban returned to India by sea in 1927 and met me in Bombay. I remember that he induced a bigoted Hindu teashop proprietor to serve us by swearing that he himself was a Hindu and I was a strict vegetarian. At our second or third meeting, late one night, a policeman saw us, as I learnt afterwards, and followed him home and arrested him on suspicion. He was taken to Peshwar for trial. Dewan Chamanlal agreed to defend him, and took me to Peshawar for the case. We saw him in the court, but were not allowed to talk to him. He was given three years on a passport charge.

All four accused in the Cawnpore Conspiracy Case, Dange, Muzaffar Ahmad, Nalini Gupta and Shaukat

Usmani, were given four years sentences. Muzaffar was released early on grounds of health; the others were still in jail when I arrived, but were released in 1927. I met Nalini Gupta soon after. He was an adventurous type. He immediately resumed his work as a courier, got a job on a ship in Bombay, and vanished, and I have never seen or heard of him since.

The Communist Party of India was formed in 1925, but of the later communists only Ghate took part in the foundation meeting. The rest did not know what a communist party is and did not try to organise it or carry on its work. I remember that Dutt was not sure whether to be amused or suspicious about it. When I arrived there were fifteen or twenty nominal members, several of whom I never met. In Bombay there were four: Ghate, Mansur, R. S. Nimbkar and K. N. Joglekar. S. S. Mirajkar was regarded as almost a member, and he formally joined soon after, as did I. K. Yagnik, S. V. Deshpande, and perhaps one or two others.

Some of these members and near-members understood the doctrine as well as I did, yet there was no activity. There was, I gathered, a certain amount of unspecified activity in Calcutta, but none in Madras or Lahore, though there were members living in both places. I reported this to Dutt, and when Bradley arrived, at the end of 1927, he told me, in a tone of reproach, that my report had been taken as a criticism of Allison, and that a black mark had been scored against him. This upset me considerably. I, who had admired Allison so much, to be accused of stabbing

him in the back ! I had merely stated the facts. In any case, he had told me that his job was with the trade unions, and he was glad of it, for he despised the petty-bourgeois communists. And did the Comintern encourage such careerism and personal rivalry, like bourgeois organisations ?

Shortly before I left England, Dutt took me to the House of Commons and introduced me to Shapurji Saklatvala, M.P. He paid a visit to India, his first for many years, about the same time as I came, and I met him in Bombay and did a brief tour of Delhi, Aligarh and one or two other places with him. He introduced me to a number of his friends, old and new, saying that they would be useful for my work. In fact none of them proved of any use, somewhat to my surprise. But I recalled afterwards that Dutt had shown by his tone either contempt or dislike of Saklatvala, and Allison confirmed the possibility of a rivalry for the leadership of the forthcoming Indian party between him and the Dutt brothers. If any such rivalry existed, it is unnecessary to say that the Dutt won.

In March, 1927, I went to Delhi for a session of the All-India Trade Union Congress. Under pressure from Allison and myself the communists had begun infiltrating this body. Four or five, including myself, attended as delegates. We had no right to do so, for none of us had yet undertaken the genuine work of a trade union. But our credentials were in order, mainly because of the help of S. H. Jhabvala, a queer, dreamy but energetic person who was secretary or president of

fifteen or twenty unions round Bombay. I doubt if he would have been so co-operative, but for Allison's and my pink skins. I was a little uncomfortable about the deception, though it was not the first time I had ventured over the edge of truth for the party, but we were sheltered by Saklatvala's prestige—he was present—and by the complaisance of Mr. N. M. Joshi, who knew what had happened but welcomed trade union workers whatever their political complexion. I had an attack of malaria in Delhi, and was nursed most solicitously by a fat, cheerful party member from Lahore, who everyone warned me was a C.I.D. agent. We expelled him from the party a few months later.

About June, 1927, I went to Lahore, and spent two months there, staying with Dewan Chamanlal, who had had close connections with the Labour Party and knew some of the British communists. I met the local members, all muhajirin. Then or later I met Abdul Majid, Gauhar Rahman, Shamsuddin Hasan, Akbar Khan and Akbar Shah. They were all very charming fellows, but disinclined to do anything. Majid alone ever did any party work—he ran an Urdu weekly for some time. Later, Akbar Khan and Akbar Shah were active in non-communist politics, I believe. The muhajirin were, altogether, a disappointment. In Lahore I was introduced to Maulana Hasrat Mohani, whom Dutt had mentioned as a "possible". He was famous as the first man to have moved in the Congress in favour of complete independence as the goal: he did so as early as 1921, I heard. But beyond this irreconcilable militancy, he had no point of contact

with communism. Then or on a later visit to Lahore Majid introduced me to Bhagat Singh. He was underground, and did not trust me entirely, but we had some talk. He was definitely not a communist then, and my impression, to the end of his life, was that he never became a communist.

I returned to Bombay about August, 1927, and within a few days was arrested and put in jail, bail being refused. I gathered from various hints that the police were thus severe with me because they had captured some cryptic letters written to and by me, and regarded me as a most desperate character. However, they finally made up their minds to accuse me of nothing more than sedition, on account of a pamphlet entitled *India and China* which, following Petrovsky's instructions, I had written and published. Two or three months later I was tried in the Bombay High Court. A distinguished bourgeois lawyer, Mr. Talyarkhan, defended me without charge; the judge, Mr. Justice Fawcett, summed up very leniently; and the jury gave in my favour. After my release I went to Police Headquarters for my confiscated property, and a senior police officer said: "I hope you realise what would have happened to you if you had done this in Russia?"

I was aware that the police had one cryptic letter of mine, for during a search of my room some months before they had seized the manuscript draft, which I had not destroyed. As I found out later from the evidence in the Meerut Case, they had intercepted other cryptic letters in the post. Clemens Dutt had given me

a cipher and code, and an invisible ink. All proved vain. The code was fairly obvious, and the C. I. D. men seem to have solved it at a glance. The cipher must have cost them a lot of work, but they broke it eventually. The invisible ink, alas, did not remain invisible. We used them mainly to communicate names, secret addresses, and messages about money. Probably the British party, or Clemens Dutt, was just beginning to learn the job of communising the colonies, and had not yet mastered the necessary techniques. The Russians would hardly have made such elementary blunders as these. I believe the party has now abandoned the post as a means of transmitting important documents and money, and relies upon couriers. Even then we had some couriers, men who took jobs on ships to London, Liverpool or Hamburg, but they came rather spasmodically. They had brought money earlier, I believe, but did not do so in my time, so far as I can remember. In one or two instances people coming to India on legitimate business brought messages, and I think small amounts of money. The overland routes were not in regular use in my time, so far as I heard.

Soon after my release I attended a session of the A.-I. T. U. C. at Cawnpore. This was a far bigger gathering than that at Delhi, and more communists and allies took part. The work was going ahead. Moreover, owing to my prosecution I had acquired some prestige. Accordingly, though my stay in India had far exceeded six months, I received orders from London to carry on. At Cawnpore I met Ganesh Shankar

Vidyarthi, a well-known congressman of those days, who was later killed trying to stop a communal riot. Seeing that I had broken my spectacles and finding that I had no money, he bought me a new pair. Lack of money was a persistent nuisance throughout my period of work for the party. I once borrowed Rs. 300 from Maulana Shaukat Ali, who though he talked a lot about red imperialism threatening India was quite friendly. Luckily I was able to pay him back. I received altogether from London ten or fifteen thousand rupees, so far as I can remember. It would have been enough to live on for two years, but it did not go very far to finance a political campaign. I came at a lean time. I do not know how much had been sent to India in earlier years, but I heard of large sums, and also heard that much of it went astray. In later years the Russians poured lakhs* into the Indian party coffers, and since independence it must have risen to crores.†

About this time, the end of 1927, we had a visit from a member of the Russian party. He was a Caucasian or Turk, to judge from his appearance. He habitually wore the red Turkish cap and passed as a Muslim. He was a good conspirator, so good that I made the romantic guess that he might be a G. P. U. man. The police seem to have obtained no information about him, though he spent months in India and met quite a number of people. I stayed with him for several days in an expensive hotel in Calcutta, and also met him at Agra, where Bradley and I had a long dis-

* Indian word for a hundred thousand.

† Indian word for ten million.

cussion with him at the top of one of the minars of the Taj Mahal. He was businesslike but quite friendly. A year later a member of the American party, on his way home from the VI World Congress of the Comintern, called on me in Calcutta. I do not know his name ; he called himself Johnson ; and I do not remember that he had any important business. But I do remember one remark of his ; "What an opportunity you have got," he said, "to make a name for yourself in the International !" I still believed that communists were above such considerations. He tried to come out into the open by making a speech at the Jharia session of the A.-I. T. U. C. at the end of 1928, but was arrested at the meeting-place and deported.

The VI World Congress had taken place in the summer of 1928. Without telling the rest of us, Shaukat Usmani decided to attend it, and went via Iran, taking three others with him. I had met one of his three companions, also like himself a muhajir. He was a light-hearted young man with poetical ambitions, named Habib Ahmad Nasim. I think I may have met one of the others, but am not sure. The first I heard of their adventure was a cable from London asking whether Usmani represented the party. I replied no, which of course was true. Usmani spoke at the Congress, and returned to India about the end of the year. He was arrested and taken to Meerut with the rest of us, and while there he was put up by the British party as a candidate for the Parliament in the election of 1929. But the other three were detained in Russia. Towards the end of the Meerut trial, an Indian from

Moscow, whom I did not see, came to Meerut and had an interview with Usmani. Shortly afterwards Usmani began to behave queerly, in fact underwent what would be called a nervous breakdown. He asked to be separated from the rest of us, and left the party, and I believe has never rejoined. The stranger had informed him that his three companions had been shot as spies in Moscow.

When we were still at liberty, in 1927 or 1928, Usmani had written an account of his travels through Afghanistan and Turkestan, which he entitled *Peshawar to Moscow*. He asked me to write a foreword for it, which I did. It contained little about politics and was not banned, though I think one or two copies appeared in the evidence at Meerut. When Usmani left the party some of the others in jail turned on me and declared that I ought not to have written the foreword in his book. "You ought to have known he was a rascal," they said. Eminently human, and also eminently communist. I have recalled this incident when reading of the communist practice of tracing the guilt of deviationists back to long-forgotten errors and associations.

As a result mainly of internal disputes in the Russian party, the VI World Congress decreed a marked change in Comintern policy. This was a swing to the "left", away from alliances with socialists, colonial nationalists, and the like, and towards revolutionary adventures. We had no direct instructions till G. M. Adhikari arrived from Europe in December, 1928, but we sensed from the brief press reports that a change

had taken place. He had arranged an all-India Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference in Calcutta in December, 1928, and I had to prepare the long printed resolutions ("theses") and the report. In these I changed the line somewhat, and though my efforts were overshadowed by more dramatic events at the Conference, I congratulated myself that I had been acute enough to see which way the Comintern wind was blowing.

People have often asked me how the Comintern imposes its ever-changing policy on the parties. What I have just related is, I think, a true account of what happened in India in 1928. The first of the sudden reversals for which the Comintern is notorious came in 1924. Then it was still a genuine international alliance of parties, at least in Europe, and the swing to the right was a reasonable, if belated, response to the decline of the post-war revolutionary wave. By 1928 the Comintern had ceased to matter, except as a field for the intrigues of the Russian party factions, and the swing to the left in that year bore no relation to world politics but was merely an outcome of these factional quarrels. Probably the Comintern bureaucracy in Moscow realised this and saw that it did not matter whether the Indian party followed the new line or the old. Certainly they took no special trouble to inform us, but when Adhikari, Johnson and the Caucasian discussed it they took the attitude that this was an important new dispensation of wisdom which of course we were anxious to hear and follow, not that anything was being imposed upon us. As for the Indian party and the two British

emissaries with it, none of us, except perhaps Dange, had any doubt that when the line changed we should go with it. It did not occur to us that the new line might hamper our work, and if it had occurred to us we should have replied at once that that was no concern of ours. What the collective wisdom of the Comintern said was right, and it was not for us to question it.

At the Workers' and Peasants' Party Conference at Calcutta in December, 1928, we endured the annoyance, rare for communists, of having one of our own little tricks played upon us. The Calcutta branch of the W. P. P. was the only one which had bothered to recruit any members, and most of its new members were from the Jugantar or Anusilan party (I forget which). Though outwardly inactive for years past, this party had maintained its discipline, and at the W. P. P. Conference its members acted as a bloc and broke up the meeting. There was no doctrinal difference: it was merely that they did not relish being admitted to the "front" party but not to the genuine inside party. Many of them later joined the communist party.

The W. P. P. was the only "front" organisation in India in my time. We tried to infiltrate the Congress, trade unions, youth leagues, and so forth, and used deceit in doing so, but we did not normally deny or even conceal that we were communists. The emphasis in the idea of the front in those days was not the same as now. The chief aim, as our letters expressed it, was to obtain "legal cover", i.e. not so much to deceive the police as to baffle them, to deny them material which could be produced in court against us. It was only

incidentally that we deceived the public, and I think that to try to do so without compelling reason would have been considered wrong in 1928. "The communists disdain to conceal their views and aims." Fronts have of course multiplied greatly since then, and some of them try to deceive not only the police, but the public, and even their non-communist members.

During 1928, M. N. Roy's differences with the Comintern came to the front, and if I remember were debated (if so dignified a word can be used) at the VI World Congress. Roy was not present, but he was known to agree with the "right" opposition, who opposed the swing at this Congress towards irresponsible extremism and isolation. He was expelled early in 1929, and was for a time a member of an international organisation of expelled and dissident communists. What was discussed at the VI World Congress, however, was his theory of "decolonisation". He had put forward this idea, without naming it, as early as 1920 or 1921, when he first went to Moscow and met Lenin. Lenin said that the Indian bourgeoisie were potentially revolutionary. Roy denied this, and casting about for arguments to support his position, cited the fact that British capital exports to India had fallen greatly after the war. This must lead, he argued, to the assumption by the Indian bourgeoisie of the task of industrialising India, and hence eventually of political power, by agreement with the British. The implication that the hated British imperialism would fade away without a revolution to speed its departure is distasteful to communists. Lenin tolerated it, and was content to let the facts as

they happened decide, but by 1928 such objectivity had vanished from Comintern thinking. Decolonisation was condemned, nominally as false, but really as depriving the communists of a revolution. Some members began to suspect that Roy would try to organise a group within the Indian party, and it was whispered that Adhikari had come from Berlin with that purpose. If he ever had any such idea he soon abandoned it. Actually Roy did set about soon after his expulsion to get a group together, but it was from the start outside the party.

There were many strikes in 1928, and members of the party, now reinforced by Dange, who had been released in 1927, contrived to gain the leadership of some of them. We also tried in a number of instances to bring about strikes. I travelled along the East Indian Railway, in company with various union men, appealing to groups of workers to strike in support of their colleagues of the Lillooah Workshop, and I visited some jute workers' bastis* asking them to come out in support of a mill strike. Many of the railwaymen we brought out lost their jobs. It occurred to me sometimes that it was a little incongruous for us members of the educated class to urge these ignorant people to face such risks for a purpose which they could not understand. However, Lenin had told us that precisely that was the job of the educated professional revolutionary.

* Indian word for slums. The bastis spring up in the midst of big towns, particularly the mill areas, and apart from very bad housing they suffer from a more or less complete absence of public utility services such as are normally provided to other dwelling areas in a municipal town. The land on which a basti grows up is generally owned by an individual landlord whose only concern seems to be rent-collection.

IV

IN THE MEERUT JAIL

In Bengal we were not very successful in bringing about or prolonging strikes, though we must have caused a good deal of loss. In Bombay the party group, Dange, Nimbkar, Mirajkar and Bradley, were highly effective, and they had the cotton mills completely tied up for five or six months. As a result, or so we heard, the Millowners' Associations of Bombay and Calcutta appealed to the Government to rid them of the nuisance, and the Government decided to launch a conspiracy case. Accordingly, one day in March, 1929, almost all the members of the C. P. I. and about an equal number of trade unionists, congressmen and others who had been working with us—30 in all—were arrested simultaneously in half a dozen different towns and taken to Meerut.

At first we were put in different parts of the Meerut jail, and we met and communicated only surreptitiously. My cell was the isolation hut in the hospital yard, and for a time I was effectively isolated. For some weeks I was unable to read, write or talk. Beyond that the only real hardship was lice. My convict warder hung his clothes on a peg which held some of mine, and the creatures migrated. I had never come across lice before, and I endured many days of itching before I discovered its cause. Our great problem was

boredom, and our first relief from it was due to a Calcutta lawyer named I. B. Sen, and a social worker named Dr. Prabhabati Das Gupta. I had met them but did not know them well ; they probably knew some of the others better, but they were not communists. They came all the way from Calcutta to see us, and sent us books and so forth. Some people in Meerut also sent us books.

I have since read of communist party instructions to members on what to do when arrested. The Comintern was young then, and I had received no such instructions. However, none were needed. We were questioned by the C. I. D. men in charge of the case, but my questioning at least was no more than formal, and seemed to be prompted by personal curiosity. None of the others reported anything more terrifying.

After some weeks of solitude we were put together in a large barrack, surrounded by a yard. In the summer we were allowed to sleep in the yard. We were given 12 annas per head per day for food, and were allowed to supervise its expenditure and to do the cooking ourselves, with the aid of two convicts. Needless to say, we lived well. We were also given a clothing allowance. Twice in the hot weather we were taken to jails in the hills. We were allowed to bring into the jail books and papers with scarcely any censorship, and we played chess, cards, table-tennis, cricket and volley-ball. The court was held in a house some distance from the jail, and we met visitors there without effective supervision. It was there that I first met Mrs. Nambiar, Ranadive, Bharadwaj, and several others

who later became prominent. I had no idea at that time that Ranadive would prove such a fire-eater as he later became.

One day we received a copy of the London communist paper, the *Daily Worker*, carrying a cartoon about us. The cartoonist had drawn on his imagination somewhat. He showed us emaciated, manacled, and staring with horror-filled eyes from close-barred windows. The contrast with the facts was disconcerting.

Though we had consistently attacked the Congress and bourgeois nationalism, a number of Congress leaders, including Pandit Motilal, Dr. Kichlew and Dewan Chamanlal, came to our help and organised our defence. Civil Disobedience began and they themselves went to jail a year later, but the lawyer whom they had asked to undertake the defence saw us right through to the end of the Sessions Court proceedings. Some money was collected in India, but most of it came from abroad. Dr. Katju and other Allahabad lawyers conducted our appeal.

We were charged under Section 121A: conspiring to deprive the King Emperor of his sovereignty of British India. The body of conspirators was the Comintern and its associated organisations and in particular the Indian party. The charge named a number of foreigners and Indians living abroad, in addition to those in the dock. No overt illegal act need have been committed. All that had to be proved was that those charged had associated together for this illegal purpose, and there was no difficulty whatever

about proving that. The programme of the Comintern and the fact of membership would have been enough. In addition there were innumerable speeches, articles and letters which bore it out. There was however some doubt about the non-communists. We had not been frank with them, and some of them, when they found what we had really been up to, were understandably annoyed. Most of them were acquitted in the end, but after spending at least a year in jail—some of them were granted bail after that time—and nearly another three years at Meerut or Allahabad defending themselves.

The first in the list of the accused was myself. There was an element of race snobbery in this, I am afraid: I was English, and of the three Englishmen in the dock I had been the longest in India and had the largest number of cryptic letters to my discredit. I had also been dragged into much trade union work and many strike meetings, often against my will, because a Gora* on the platform improved morale. I had no doubt been more effective as a propagandist among the educated, and I had helped to ginger up the party, for it is not only with the illiterate that a pink skin carries prestige. When I arrived in India the members of the party were inactive, but this was largely because they did not know what to do, or if they knew what to do they were ashamed to do it. They knew all about publishing papers and pamphlets, but these things cost money. Allison had dismissed them all as petty bourgeois. I myself had been amused to

* The Indian word for "whiteman". It literally means "white-skinned."

find that they referred to each other as "gentleman" and "Mister". I persuaded some of them to enter trade unions, and when the Calcutta group got out a party paper I took the lead in selling it in the streets. Once over the barrier, however, they had worked well. I had merely been a gadfly.

The Government, we heard, had first considered interning us all under one of the old Regulations normally used for dealing with obstreperous Princes. They finally decided against it, but they must have regretted their decision, for the Meerut Case proceedings lasted more than four years and cost the Government, we calculated, over 20 lakhs, not to speak of the propaganda. Far from damning communism, the Case encouraged it. The propaganda note was prominent from the start. The prosecutor was a witty lawyer from Calcutta named Langford James, who opened with a political speech lasting three or four days. He did all he could to rub in our real opinions about bourgeois nationalism, but then, as now, nationalists took very little notice. He also made one or two good points against Marxism. He cited a Comintern debate in which someone had mentioned facts which told against the official line. The official reply was that if these facts were admitted the necessity for revolution would vanish, which was impossible : therefore, it was implied, they were not facts. We laughed, but we had no answer.

If the prosecution propaganda back-fired against the British regime, ours was, we heard, fairly effective. On the whole the revelation of our secret methods

caused people to admire us: we had done what most young men wanted to do, and but for the Mahatma would have done. We had denounced the Congress leaders, but so had a great many other people—the youth leagues, the terrorists, the independence group of Jawaharlal and Subhas, and the Congress left who soon after formed the Socialist Party. We had our opportunity in the sessions court to make political statements, and these were widely published in the press. Several of them were long enough to make a short book, and altogether no doubt most of what can be said in favour of communism was said. The others declared that they were not communists, but so far as I remember, none of them attacked communism or us.

Apart from the statements of the accused the trial was almost featureless. The main case was simple and could have been proved quite quickly. The prosecution certainly made a mistake in bringing in such vast masses of superfluous evidence. Within a few months of the start the lively Langford James died, and a dull person named Kemp took his place. The proceedings, which were in any case largely formal, became such a bore that not one of the accused, so far as I remember, tried to follow them. We read, talked or slept in the dock, or when allowed spent the day in the garden of the house which was used as the court.

The 31 accused had split into two almost equal groups, in effect the communists and the non-communists, which engaged in petty but bitter squabbles over politics and everything else. The party group were also involved as advisers, and in part as rivals,

with those outside the jail who were reorganising the party and resuming its campaign. They came to Meerut to consult us, and set up what amounted to a party office there. Without the excitement of participation, and from our position behind the scenes, this party work seemed downright sordid. We were convinced, as we informed the Comintern (through a bulky document smuggled out of jail), that for the sake of prestige the new party leaders were claiming bigger successes than they had actually achieved. The C. I. D. man who interrogated me at Meerut had asked me for whom we were working: who would rule in the communist utopia? I replied Ram Swarup, the common worker or peasant of India; and he looked amused. His sneer was now proving to have been justified. Despite real devotion, the communist leader is just as ambitious a careerist as any other politician.

When we had been in jail a year or two, the significance of the new Comintern line which we had accepted so uncomprehendingly at Calcutta began to show itself. It compelled the renovated party to split the central trade union body twice within two years, and to direct fierce criticism at the Congress, whose great Civil Disobedience campaigns made our activities look rather silly. We found fault with what was being done, but we did not direct our attack at the persons really responsible, viz. the Comintern authorities in Moscow. We still took it as axiomatic that they were right, and blamed the new leaders of the Indian party, doing so all the more vehemently because of our jealousy of them. This is again an interesting sidelight

on the psychological mechanism which allows communist authorities to persist in their claims to infallibility and to put all the blame for their errors on subordinates.

It is probable that Dange, a man who thinks for himself, saw this at the time, but we were on bad terms with him for most of the jail period, and at one point expelled him, so we did not hear his views. Joshi expressed some doubts about the wisdom of the Comintern policy, but I think he was the only one to do so. My own feelings were not of doubt or criticism but of boredom. I was closely involved in the preparation of the defence case, an immense and tedious job, and in the politics of the jail and the party outside. I gradually lost interest in all three, and became absorbed in reading and writing on other subjects. I remember being amused at talk of "militancy", especially of militancy in philosophy, and being annoyed when the judge called me a fanatic. I have no doubt that here was the beginning of an emotional turn away from communism. But for some years it did not take me very far. While I remained in jail my questionings concerned no more than remote abstractions. Eventually in fact I abandoned communism not because of any personal experience, but because of a gradual loss of confidence in it, brought about mainly by reading.

I had never felt comfortable about the dialectic. I had sometimes been inclined to smile at it, but when it was borne in upon me that the big brains in Moscow took it seriously, I quieted my doubts with the assurance that it was a higher mystery, which might be revealed

to me in due time. I believe that was then the usual attitude in Britain even among leading communists. I now thought about it more, but the effect was only to make darkness more visible. In particular I did not see how materialism and the dialectic could go together. One day Joshi remarked, "Marxism says that what is historically inevitable is socially desirable." I was startled. Undoubtedly he had stated the Marxian metaphysics correctly, yet clearly I could not accept it. From that moment, I think, I realised that I was a heretic. I was also puzzled about ethics—not conduct, but ethical theory. Manifestly Marxism as a guide to practical activity needs an ethical theory, and yet Marx implicitly denied validity to ethics, and his modern followers did so explicitly.

The rest of the Marxian system is little better, and when later I was able to consider it without its emotional halo, I gradually realised how defective it is. But nevertheless how attractive, both to devoted youth and, paradoxically, to disillusioned middle age. Great numbers of people who are far from professing Marxism have accepted from the intellectual air of the time the cynical and knowing Marxian generalisations. But its merits are specious. The much-vaunted materialist conception of history is largely a muddle, of very limited validity. Its economic explanation of war is the most widely accepted of all its theories; indeed belief in this doctrine seems to have become almost universal. Not quite universal, however: it is not accepted by the experts on the subject, the historians, for it will not stand up to the facts. The experts are

equally unanimous in rejecting the Marxian economics. Its great success, of course, is as a technique of arousing hatred and breaking up society.

In jail I had leisure for the first time to read about India, and found it a little disturbing. It was clear that the history of India has been very different from that of Europe. India has substantially no slavery and no feudalism, and in the mediaeval period the merchant class appear to have put up no struggle for power such as their confrères in Europe conducted. Yet, as I understood it, Marxism maintains that all civilisations follow the same course of evolution. I ought to have read Marx more attentively. I have since learnt that he differentiates clearly between the European and the Asian lines of social evolution, and that it is only the communist school who have denied the difference.

At the cost of great labour to Joshi and myself I acquired a reading knowledge of Hindi. One of the first books I read was Mahatma Gandhi's *Atmakatha*. I was much impressed, and formed the intention at once of writing a study of Gandhi from what I believed was a new angle. I had not read Max Weber, or indeed heard of him, but his main idea was familiar. It struck me that Gandhi could be viewed as an Indian Calvin, as propounding a religious ideology which suited the needs of a "rising capitalist class". That is the theme of a book which I wrote in internment three years later. But even then I felt that, however sound the formula may be, it cannot comprehend the whole of Gandhi. At the beginning of the Meerut case one of our lawyers had remarked that we communists did

not understand India. Reading Gandhi I began to see what he may have meant.

There were lighter moments in jail. Thirty people, most of them still young, well fed and allowed considerable liberty, must amuse themselves. We played games, exercised, composed light verse, and sang songs. I remembered some of G. D. H. Cole's political parodies of popular songs, and sometimes sang them :

Put the thing through quickly,
Wage the class war slickly,
Hang the boss from lamp-post high—
But don't hang me.
Stick to Marx, my hearty,
Damn the Labour Party,
Keep the hell-fires burning bright
For the bourgeoisie.

I remember that Joshi, who does not lack humour, said "Quite right. What is wrong with that?" and Hutchinson showed clearly that he thought I displayed improper levity about sacred matters. During my period in jail under trial in the sedition case in Bombay I had written a longish effusion in heroic couplets addressed to Kedarnath Saigal. He was one of the accused in the Meerut Case, but either the police did not find this document or they decided not to use it as evidence. This was fortunate for my reputation with Hutchinson, for it made fun of the Comintern in the same way as Cole had done.

Hutchinson was a curious case of the fellow-traveller who is more loyal than party members themselves. His parents were members of one of the small

parties which fused to form the British communist party in 1920. By that time his father had died, and his mother did not join the communist party, but she remained on very friendly terms with many of its leading members. Hutchinson was thus brought up in the party atmosphere, and further acquired the more modern party outlook during a long stay on the continent of Europe. In the jail he was the first to scent the formation of an "opposition" group among the non-communists, and in the subsequent quarrels he was the most intransigent on the communist side. On his release in 1933 he went home, and in 1939 he joined the army. He was captured at Dunkirk, and spent the rest of the war as a prisoner. In 1945 he entered Parliament as a Labour member, and voted and spoke consistently with the crypto-communist group led by Pritt and Zilliacus. Bob Darke in his book on the British party says that several of this group were actually members of the Communist Party.

Despite the trial and the quarrels, the earlier part of the period in jail passed pleasantly enough, for me at any rate. But eventually the strain had its effects. I fell rather seriously ill, and the excitement of conviction and sentence—I was given 12 years, fortunately reduced on appeal to 2—and then of separation from the others, led to profound depression, from which I recovered only after some months. (I have ventured to discuss the psychology of imprisonment in an article which appeared in the *Modern Review* in 1937). I was released in October, 1934, in a confused state of mind. I now realised that I should be more of a misfit than

ever in England, and had no wish to go back ; while I was interested in India and wished to stay, at least for some time. I was now sure that I had no message for India, but I still retained some wavering loyalty to the party. I told the group in Calcutta that I intended to remain a member, and those in Bombay that I intended to resign ; and when I went to Madras I became engaged to be married. In December, 1934, I was arrested again and interned under the emergency legislation passed to suppress Civil Disobedience. I spent 18 months in the Fort at Belgaum, and was released finally in June, 1936. There I read Gandhi more extensively and wrote most of my book on him. His ideas and personality strongly attracted the puritan in me and I was inclined to think that in internal Indian affairs he might be partly right. But I could see no way of reconciling his principles with the grim realities of world politics at the time. I may say that I feel the same difficulty about the equally grim realities of world politics now.

PART TWO

V

COMMUNISM IN PRACTICE

At this time, 1936, Russia was pursuing the Popular Front policy against the Nazis and Fascists. I sympathised with it fully. On the other hand, there were already disturbing reports about internal affairs in Russia, and after my release I was confronted with Trotsky's and Eastman's analyses, and the descriptive books of Lyons, Chamberlin, Gide, and later Utley, and of several lesser but not less convincing witnesses. Except Gide, these were people who had lived for years in Russia as ordinary members of the public: their testimony had far greater weight than that of the Webbs, which was obviously second-hand. All had begun as supporters of the Soviet system, and as I read them I found many of my own doubts more clearly expressed and shown to be justified. In any case the public trials of the former party leaders were enough to show that in communism more than the abstract philosophy was at fault. I never believed the confessions, and the execution of men whom I had been led—rightly, I believe, in many cases—to respect, and still believed innocent, shocked me considerably.

It had never been a secret that Stalin opposed Leninist equality, but information at this time showing how far inequality had gone was a blow. About 1939 the British party published a pamphlet apologising for

the existence of "Soviet millionaires". I had always felt that equality is the heart of communism. But freedom is also an essential part of the ideal: its abandonment in the 1920's was supposed to be only a temporary necessity, and it was to have been restored by the Stalin Constitution in 1936. In the first election under that constitution no opposition candidates were allowed, and everybody was elected with a 98 per cent vote. This was not only a scandal in itself; it was proof that the most solemn assurance by the Soviet government had no value whatever. After this I felt no certainty that the story current at that time about a communist-nazi alliance to conquer the world was untrue. The Stalin-Hitler pact was then no great shock. But I began to write strongly in criticism of Soviet policy only after the Russian invasion of Finland at the end of 1939. There is something clear-cut and irrevocable, like murder, about such despatch of one's army across a neighbour's frontier.

These events caused me much disillusionment, but they opened my eyes gradually and did not greatly surprise me. I felt that I understood how a party inspired by Marx and Lenin, establishing a dictatorship with the object of dragging a huge population out of its backward state, had had to compromise in all kinds of ways and to postpone realisation of the ideal until the ideal itself had lost all reality. Their rule would degenerate inevitably towards a colonial regime. Leninism may be feasible with a party of supermen. The communists I knew were not very different from ordinary men. Their conversion had raised them

above much of the pettiness of ordinary life, but I had seen enough to know that they could fall again to the ordinary level ; and then Marxism and Leninism, with their contempt for moral principle, would become a license for ambition, deception and brutality. I began to see the danger of Lenin's fundamental doctrine of power at any cost. What was wrong was not, as the Gandhists say, that communists are willing to adopt evil means to a good end: it is that the means, which were always unrestrained by moral limitations, have become all-important, and the end has been forgotten, so that communism has become effectively divorced from ideals. It was at one time, perhaps, progressive. It was certainly idealistic. But that phase is past. It is now a conspiracy using for ulterior ends the progressive ideas it has inherited from the old communists.

What was known to the world at that time was but an outline. Fuller information became available after the war, when a large number of officials, inmates of labour camps, and so forth, escaped and published their stories. I confess that despite my confidence that I understood the communist mind, their accounts staggered me. It was like H. G. Wells' and Jack London's fictional prophecies of the final dictatorship of the capitalists, but it was called socialism. For some time I tried to explain it as due to Stalin, who seems to have been at once primitive and neurotic. He was indeed a monster, but I am not sure that he did more than add a final touch of horror to it. What has happened is the natural result of the communist policy, which has replaced liberty and equality by the short-term ideal (if it can

be so called) of totalitarianism, and put it into effect with the grimly amoral communist determination.

Recent critics have protested that we must not idealise Lenin and condemn Stalin. I do not agree. Lenin remained at heart a revolutionary libertarian and equalitarian, but chose totally inappropriate means to achieve his ideals. Stalin took over all that was bad in Lenin and forgot the ideals. He believed in a hierarchical, bureaucratic despotism. If Lenin had been granted foreknowledge, he might have decided against taking power in 1917. But once the power machine was set up, retreat became very difficult. Given the communist mentality, no further explanation is needed.

That mentality is religious, after the manner of Christianity and Islam. It sets before itself a concrete goal, a paradise, declared by the laws of cosmic evolution to be inevitable and infinitely precious; and those laws also declare that the way to the goal must lie through unrelenting struggle against bitter opposition, and must lead to a final armageddon in which the dark forces of the old order will be destroyed. Even when the content of the goal has completely changed it remains compulsive; and even when the image of a final armageddon has been considerably toned down, the duty to carry on the revolution to complete victory over the whole world remains.

To men with that outlook, it is easy to start with stern measures against open enemies, and to go on step by step till they are accustomed to mass violence as a routine administrative procedure, and habitually inflict

upon people who obstruct the cosmic process outrages such as men in other cultures perpetrate only for the sake of religion, in war, or against people whom they regard as sub-human.

The ruling idea of the unique, predetermined historical process, which the party alone understands and brings down into the realm of material reality, explains the astonishing behaviour of the communists in relation to the arts and sciences. The pre-communist Marxists held that economic and political conditions partly (they often said wholly) determine ideas. The doctrine is not new with Marx, but his school place great emphasis on it, and they have pointed out important connections between social conditions and ideas. But, the argument goes on, the party can foretell the social future and make it come into being; the party can therefore foretell ideas and make them come into being. The ideas appropriate to any historical period are the true ideas for it; therefore the ideas the party foretells and brings into being are the truth for this era. Hence the party possesses the key to Truth, and must instruct scientific men, writers and artists as to the more general ideas, at least, that are to govern their work.

The beginnings of this line of thought were to be seen in the 1920s. It gained ground, especially in relation to the arts, in the early 30s, and in the sciences in the later 30s. It provided the theoretical cover under which the ambitious Lysenko was able to procure the liquidation of his rivals, and many less publicised atrocities and absurdities were committed. The num-

ber of intellectuals known to have been liquidated (killed) for purely intellectual reasons runs into hundreds. Nevertheless the Soviet authorities seem to have been somewhat hesitant about it. Their control of the arts, the social sciences, history and philosophy has been very complete, but they have been less consistent in science, and while terror reigned among the geneticists, research men in some other sciences have been allowed to get away with a mere formal subscription to dialectical materialism. That it has gone so far, however, is striking evidence of the hold the Marxian theory has upon their thinking.

In these broad terms I think I understand what has happened in Russia. But understanding it does not make it any less objectionable. I have been continually surprised at the failure of other people to react to it as I do. Doubtless I am involved to some extent. I have read and thought more about it than most people have done; I once worked for this party and upheld this policy; and I am so far responsible for its horrors. But even to people without any such connection, these horrors are not remote events of merely historical interest. India lies right in the path of the world revolution. Communist bases ring round her northern frontiers. The party inside the country has shown its potentialities. India is a backward country—more so than Russia in 1917. Communism here would inevitably bring purges, genocide, massacres of scores of millions, whole provinces starved into submission, all the ideas of the past and all dissident ideas of the present stamped out with merciless rigour, systematic

indoctrination of the whole people with patent falsehoods, universal espionage, penetrating into every home, children denouncing their parents and publicly rejoicing at their execution.... Yet most people discuss this not very remote prospect with cool detachment, and do not seem to feel called upon to do anything to avert it.

There is no room for doubt about the facts. Anyone who does not deliberately refuse to see the truth must conclude that that is what happens under communism. But if anyone wants a simple test, the refugees provide it. From every communist country there is a steady exodus of illegal refugees, who smuggle themselves out, knowing that if they are caught they will be shot. Thousands escape every month from East Germany, Czechoslovakia and Hungary. Pandit Nehru stated in Parliament that from 1945 to 1950 two million North Koreans fled to South Korea. That is 20 per cent of the population, in five years. Reflect on the obvious comparison: Indians rightly objected to British rule and insisted that it cease, yet during 150 years, though they were free to leave the country if they wished, how many went abroad rather than face the horrors at home?

Indians' indifference to the terrors which threaten them has of course a political background. Ever since the Revolution, except during the war, Russia has condemned the colour bar and colonialism, while the Western Powers practise them. People are slow to discard attitudes formed in other days. The colonial powers are not now trying to subject India to colonia-

lism, nor to compel her to set up a colour bar : but Russia is trying to make her adopt communism. Nor indeed is Russia innocent in the matter of colonialism. The Muslims and Buddhists of the Tsar's empire remain under the Red empire. The Muslims especially have been treated with great cruelty, and many have fled to India. These countries still suffer periodic purges for "bourgeois nationalism". True, they are being industrialised and educated—and colonised by Russian and East European deportees, who in some places now outnumber the original inhabitants. But the view usually held in India about colonies is that whether the administration is progressive or otherwise does not matter : the duty of the colonial power, in the Gold Coast equally with Kenya, is to get off their backs. Why does this not apply to the Russian colonies in Turkestan and Siberia, not to speak of Eastern Europe ?

This apparent acquiescence in a new subjection has caused a number of observers to speculate. M. N. Roy in his caustic way used to say that the Indian mentality is naturally authoritarian—if it cannot dictate it prefers to be dictated to. People often tell me that they wish the British regime could return. Whether they are sincere or merely trying to flatter me, they supply evidence of the authoritarian attitude. Doubtless all men are fascinated by bloodshed, and those most of all whose normal life is orderly and peaceful. But the indifference of the Indian public to the danger of communism is due mainly, I believe, to the special outlook cultivated by Hinduism, which assesses conduct in terms of subjective sincerity, and almost rejects the

category of error, regarding every doctrine as an aspect of truth, or a path to truth. The communists are eminently sincere and self-sacrificing young men, so there must, it is thought, be some validity in their ideas. If then they prove capable of taking power, it would be wrong to deny it to them. Doubtless they have much to learn, but only their own experience will teach them. People who argue in this way should remember their own historical experience with Islam. Communism is a vastly more powerful and hypocritical Islam. If we give the young men their chance, on the theory that they must learn by their own experience, they may learn, but not before they have destroyed India.

VI

M. N. ROY

Some months after my release from internment in 1936 I met M. N. Roy, who had also just been released. I had first heard of him 14 years before, and he was the authority in the Comintern who had approved my despatch to India. I was attracted by him personally, and later came to admire the courage with which he stuck to his opinions at any cost. But at this time I did not feel very sympathetic to him politically. My own views were quite chaotic, and I could not diagnose his, but I felt dimly that he was still possessed by an orthodoxy. I gathered later that at that time he was in contact with some of his old friends of the "right" communist opposition, and in fact he remained a communist of that school for another five years.

In my book on Gandhi, written in internment, but published three years later, I expressed strong criticism of liberal imperialism and the Government of India Act of 1935. At the time I felt I was overdoing it : current nationalist opinion carried me away. After release I read more widely and modified my opinion somewhat, and also moderated the draft of the book. Early in the war I said in an article in M. N. Roy's paper that India would get Swaraj at the end of the war. Roy asked me why I was so sure. I could not answer but I had no doubt : anybody who knew the

British mind would have answered as I did. In the same way I predicted in a discussion group in 1938 or 9 that Britain and Russia would be allied against Germany. All the other members of the group expected Britain to back Germany in an attack on Russia. I knew the British mentality: they knew the Marxian account of it.

When the war began I felt strongly that India ought to support it. All my friends said that slavery to Britain and slavery to Germany were equally objectionable, and they were quite unmoved by my reply that slavery to Britain would soon end. I also sometimes replied that slavery to Britain and to Germany were not quite the same thing. People who had read the *Brown Book of the Hitler Terror* could not deny that, but they had their answer: that the necessity of fighting Hitler would make Britain imitate Hitler—a common “left” doctrine at that period.

Though the communist party supported the war from 1942 on, I felt no inclination to ally myself with it, but I was attracted by M. N. Roy’s case for support of the war. The communists acted under discipline, whereas Roy acted from conviction, when it would have been far easier for him to take the popular line. In 1943 or 4 I joined the Radical Democratic Party, and I remained a fairly active member till it was wound up. I shared its hope that after the war Russia and the Western powers would keep the peace and that the example of each would benefit the other. However, I think I was always a bit sceptical about it. I remember writing in 1943 on the execution of Alter and

Ehrlich, two Jewish leaders of the Polish socialists, who were executed in Russia in that year on the charge of working for Hitler. I never felt any doubt that Russia was guilty in the Katyn case, exposed about 1944, in which some 10,000 Polish prisoners of war were secretly murdered and buried. Later, when Russia set up the "People's Democracies" in eastern Europe my illusions about them lasted only a short time.

Roy felt some doubt too, but he did not express it very freely. He wanted authentic information, and he may have felt that it would be disloyal to Stalin if he were to criticise Russian policies. He had a high regard for Stalin's ability and courage, and their friendship dated from the 20s and had ceased before absolute power had wrought its worst corruption upon Stalin. Moreover Roy was always very suspicious of America. I do not know whether this sprang from experience—he spent a year or so in America about 1916—or from theory. In any case he is one of those responsible for the widespread opinion that America, being a capitalist power, must try to establish an empire and take over India from the British.

However, about the end of the war he changed his theoretical opinions a great deal. He abandoned a large part of Marxism, and began to formulate his own doctrine of radical humanism. I liked these ideas and supported them, though with some doubts about their abstract philosophy and their strong bias against religion. However, an Englishman cannot be expected to attach much importance to abstract ideas. I was more impressed by Roy's practical proposals. I had little

confidence then—I have somewhat more now, but perhaps not much more—in the ability of the Congress and the English-educated class it represents to manage India through a parliamentary system. I therefore welcomed an alternative which it seemed might be at once more democratic and more stable. But no doubt it was too idealistic to work.

Roy had great gifts, and his death at just over 60 was a national loss. He had been ineffective because he somehow failed to project his very attractive personality beyond a narrow circle of friends, and because until his last few years his thinking was confined within the categories of Marxism. When he began to discard Marxism he moved fast. He greatly changed his views about Gandhi, for example, though he never relaxed his vigorous opposition to nationalism. About 1948 he decided that party politics is wrong, so he persuaded the other members to dissolve the party. We remained together for a year or two in an informal way, but then began to disagree about current affairs, especially the cold war. Roy and some of the others held that the way to avert the threatening war and prevent the further expansion of communism was to think out and put into effect a new social and economic plan superior to both communism and capitalism. Accordingly he tended to be neutralist. The other group held that the prospect of evolving a clearly superior social system in a short time was remote, and meanwhile the job of saving such civilisation as we have and defeating the communist offensive was urgent. I myself was of this view.

The record of communism in Russia was a great disillusionment to a former supporter, but it was not at first a cause of active opposition. While its misdeeds were confined to the borders of a distant land, one could contemplate them with philosophic melancholy and go about one's business. Things changed when it became clear that they were no longer to be confined to Russia. The "People's Democracies" soon became party dictatorships and Russian colonies, subject to drastic economic exploitation and cultural Russification, not to speak of wholesale massacre.

The treatment of these countries in this brutal and unprincipled fashion seemed inexplicable as a defence measure. To arouse a frenzy of fear and hate in one's neighbours is a clumsy way of defending oneself against them. Manifestly Russia advanced into Europe in pursuance of the world revolution. Lenin and Stalin both said that the Red army would serve this purpose. Roy, who had known Russia not in the cynical thirties and forties but in the relatively idealistic twenties, confirmed this reading of events. He said that Stalin had no confidence in the communist parties but relied on the Red Army to spread the revolution.

I do not feel sure that Russia's policy on the atomic energy question was prompted by revolutionary motives, but looking back, that seems most likely. She did not want U. N. officials inspecting her plant, but surely that is a minor consideration. Presumably she did not want to be entangled in a world organisation which, as contrasted with the U. N., would have had really important functions, and would have been a standing

denial of the doctrine of the two worlds. If she had been really afraid of American attack, as she has always professed to be, she would have submitted even to this ; but it is perfectly clear that she has no fear of America. If she had been afraid, she would not have blockaded Berlin in 1948, or invaded South Korea in 1950.

It seems most probable that Stalin grasped from the first the possibilities inherent in the atom-bomb race for wars of nerves, pressure tactics and propaganda. Certainly Russia has gained great advantages from it. By loudly and continuously "demanding" that the bomb be "banned", but rejecting all specific proposals for doing so, she has contrived to present America as the culprit, and has been able to continue expanding her empire by local aggression and subversion, and to defy America to oppose to these attacks the most powerful weapon she possesses. The world is being confronted piecemeal with the dilemma : yield Czechoslovakia, Korea, Indo-China, Formosa to Russo-Chinese communist imperialism, or face a world war fought with nuclear bombs. Under this psychological pincer-attack all Europe has been thoroughly demoralised, even Churchill has turned Chamberlain in his old age, and America can offer no more than verbal defiance. Provided that atomic war does not result, the rejection of atomic energy control will be regarded in the future as the shrewdest thing Stalin ever did.

Independence in 1947 was clouded, for me, by doubt whether India could maintain it. Such confidence as I had was shaken by the death of the Mahatma, and by the Russian seizure of Czechoslovakia the next

month. I began to say, as a striking way of expressing my anxiety, that India would become a Russian colony within ten years, and I began in a more systematic way to do what I could to warn people. There are few things duller than warnings which one does not believe, so I must have bored many readers ; for I fear I convinced very few. I also wrote a pamphlet, *The Communist Peace Appeal*, for the Democratic Research Service of Bombay, and another, *Communism and India*, for the *Eastern Economist*. In 1951 the Indian Congress for Cultural Freedom was formed, mainly on the initiative of M. R. Masani, and I joined it and became a secretary and a fairly frequent contributor to its bulletin, *Freedom First*.

But by this time China had fallen. I have twice in my life spent a sleepless night as a result of public events. One was when France made peace with Germany in 1940 ; the other was when Chiang Kai-shek left mainland China for Formosa in 1949. Mao Tse-tung's victory was a triumphant vindication of the communist technique of conquest without overt aggression, a shattering demonstration of the weakness of America as the defender of the free countries, and a change in the balance of power so great that world conquest becomes for the first time a feasible proposition.

I have never ceased to marvel at Indian opinion on Chinese communism. It has been even more fantastically misguided than on Russia. I can understand and sympathise with Asian solidarity. But Chiang Kai-shek is as much an Asian as Mao Tse-tung. Chiang

was not an American "stooge"; on the contrary, he habitually ignored American advice, even when it happened to be good. China had been a "semi-colonial" country: it was Chiang's regime which re-established her integrity and equality of status. There was no need or basis for Mao's nationalist outcry. Mao's claim to be a nationalist is difficult to reconcile with his avowals that he is a faithful disciple of Stalin and a disciplined member of the Comintern. Like all communists he is a traitor: he is destroying his country's distinctive culture. What the Gita is to India the teaching of Confucius is to China, but the surest way to a death-sentence in Mao's China is to praise Confucius.

Mao claims to have led a revolt against Chiang's corruption. In fact the corruption of Chiang's regime was due mainly to bankruptcy, brought about largely by Mao's twenty-years-long campaign of sabotage aimed deliberately at maximising misery, rounded off by nine years of Japanese invasion. And Mao's regime is by no means free from corruption, either: or why should so many officials be shot for it? Chiang was not a "fascist": his ideas seem to have been similar to those of the Ataturk. In his last years he tried to establish democracy, but was frustrated by the disorganisation of the country through prolonged war, and its backwardness—technically and administratively it is many decades behind India. Mao led an agrarian revolution, true, but it was a revolution based on false promises, for he brought the peasants to his side by promising them the land, and is now taking it away from them;

just as he won over the "national" bourgeoisie by promising to let them work for the nation but is now liquidating them ; and as he won over the intelligentsia, and now that he has them in his power is subjecting them to brain-washing and thought-control. It is a highly equivocal revolution ; and in any case it is doubtful if Mao could have won merely on his programme, deceitful though it was. He won by the weight of new Russian and Japanese arms, and the military guidance of some of Russia's best generals.

Since the taking of power there has been a great parade of reforms, but in fact there are few which Chiang had not initiated. Mao's boasted emancipation of women, for example, is not new in principle. Speed and ruthlessness and relative efficiency hardly amount to a revolution, though they may simulate one. It is conspicuously a case of a good cause taken out of the hands of its originators by ambitious men who are using it for ulterior purposes, and have largely cancelled the good in it.

Mao is evidently an abler man than Chiang : perhaps on the level of Lenin. He is doubtless sincere in the communist sense. He believes his aims to be good, and so is willing to indulge in wholesale deception and murder to achieve them. We have unimpeachable evidence—the statements of Chinese cabinet ministers—that the regime has executed over 2,000,000 citizens since 1951 (the true figure is doubtless far higher). Mao's sincerity will achieve no better results than Lenin's for he is making exactly the same mistake. He is establishing the Stalinist state : dragging China

through unlimited slaughter to total enslavement. Is this the awakening of Asia? Why should Gandhi's India applaud?

Yet some of the old Gandhians are conspicuous among those who applaud China and Russia. Probably some of them have been feeling out in the cold since the death of their Master, and perhaps at heart doubtful about his principles. They have therefore been looking for a new home, and have found it in their own expurgated version of communism. It is possible to guess why they chose that direction for their search. All his life Gandhi led the campaign of denunciation of the Western civilisation. He also criticised communism, of course; but if all he said on the subject were to be examined, it would probably convey the idea, which is widespread in India, though seldom made explicit, that the ultimate responsibility for the crimes of Bolshevism lies with Western capitalism. It is as if he regarded the Western capitalists as adult, conscious sinners, whereas the communists are merely bad boys, who no doubt deserve to be scolded but are really guilty only of imitating their elders. The older generation of Indians admired the West, but then revolted against it; and about the time of their disillusionment, the Bolsheviks carried out their revolution against the West. This coincidence remains a bond of union, despite the fact that the two revolutions were in opposite directions.

The communistically-inclined Gandhians can no doubt quote in defence of their view a great deal of self-flagellation from Western Intellectuals. Shaw said

that the nineteenth century was the wickedest period in history. Clearly statements of that kind are neurotic. The exceptional wickedness of capitalism is a myth. Indians have been very naturally inclined to accept the theory that capitalist imperialism is the cause of war. It is time to realise that one's dislike of imperialism does not suffice to prove a proposition of that kind. In fact the theory is quite unsound. In the same way people have been far too ready to believe the communist story that the Western powers' intervention in the Russian civil war was responsible for the Bolsheviks' aggressiveness and terror. On the facts it is not true. The intervention may have been ill-advised, but in the circumstances it was not improper, and it cannot have been unexpected. It is certainly not responsible for the Bolsheviks' militancy, which long antedated it. The communists began the class war in 1917, as they did again in 1945, on their own initiative.

The communist sympathies of some of the old Gandhians are perhaps comprehensible, but they remain a strange paradox. All his public life Gandhi stood on the twin principles—he declared that for him they were equivalent to God—of truth and non-violence. Yet if there is anything about the communists more conspicuous than their appalling violence, it is their total contempt for truth. Palme Dutt once made a remark about the limitless mendacity of the Nazis: actually it is truer of the communists, who are more thorough and scientific in their campaign of deception. The iron curtain, which is intended solely for the purpose of deceiving the 900,000,000 inside it about the

1,500,000,000 outside, and vice versa, is the most grandiose essay in mendacity ever attempted. From Stalin's rewriting of history to exclude Trotsky from its pages and to magnify his own modest achievements, through many kindred efforts, such as the rewriting of the history of science and technology to make them purely Russian creations, and all the other fantastic distortions of the *Soviet Philosophical Dictionary* and the *Great Soviet Encyclopaedia*, down to the Stalin Constitution, the Peace Campaign, and the highly organised attempt by the Chinese to convince the world that the Americans practised germ warfare in Korea, the history of Stalinist communism is a history of continual and outrageous lying. It is queer indeed that men who still profess the Gandhian principles can blandly ignore all this, praising the communist governments for what they show docile visitors, and directing a never-ending stream of acrid criticism at the Western powers.

It is difficult to understand India's infatuation for China; and her dislike of America is not much more comprehensible. Though I do not share it, I can sympathise with the common British dislike of Americans. They have annoying manners and tricks of speech, and they are more powerful than we are, and not always very scrupulous competitors. In my time in the British communist party there was some attempt to work up feeling against America. A member published a book, *Americanism : a World Menace*. They made much use of Upton Sinclair's muckraking books, and of the Mooney and later the Sacco-Vanzetti cases. American

finance was held responsible for German Nazism, and for a time the communists denounced Roosevelt's New Deal as fascism. On the other hand, it was one of the Russians' pet ideas, dutifully relayed by Palme Dutt, that Britain and America were bound some day to go to war to "redistribute the colonies". Dutt's *Labour Monthly* had a special number on this topic about 1925, if I remember. But somehow none of this propaganda moved me one way or the other. I can claim to be indifferent to America, and I should have thought that Indians, whose emotional relations to America are far less close than an Englishman's, would be at least equally indifferent.

Actually a high proportion of Indians are very hostile to America. The day of the news of the first Russian atom-bomb explosion, I met a distinguished Indian academic man. He was delighted. "It will take these damned Americans down a peg or two," he said. He has not been to America and has no personal cause of ill-feeling; he was reflecting, correctly, the general reaction. But this reaction is not rational: it is suicidal.

There was an immense outcry, for example, against McCarthy. He is doubtless an unpleasant type, and might have become a danger, but he did no more than tell a lot of lies and cause some hundreds of innocent people to lose their jobs. Why is there no outcry against Mao Tse-tung, who has told far more lies, and has caused some millions of innocent people to lose their lives? McCarthy did nothing of importance to harm India; but Mao Tse-tung, only six years ago,

sent a message of encouragement to the men who were conducting an armed rebellion in Telengana, and in many other ways, by word and deed, has tried to overthrow the Government of India.

This strange state of affairs is of course largely due to American colour-prejudice. Undoubtedly this prejudice exists, and it is deplorable. Yet people have very exaggerated notions about it. I was struck by this a few years ago when I had to review a little book, *The Two Worlds*, written after a short visit to America by Srinarayan Agarwala. Most of it is fair, but he gave the impression that during his stay of a few weeks several Negroes had been lynched. I was so puzzled by this that I sent for the facts. I was informed that according to the figures compiled by the Tuskegee Institute, a Negro organisation, the number of lynchings in the whole of the United States, which stood at an average of a hundred per year round the turn of the century, had fallen steadily till the figures were two. one, or usually none per year after the second world war. Sri Agarwala had been deceived, apparently, by the repeated discussion in the press of a single lynching case. This exceptionally well-informed and conscientious Indian writer had taken it so much for granted that he did not check his impression that there had been half a dozen lynching cases in as many weeks.

An equally curious instance of the power of slogans to prevail over facts is the belief that because America is "capitalist" therefore she must be "imperialist". Similarly, because she is the greatest of the powers opposed to the communist bloc, it is assumed that she

has a bloc also, and is therefore equally, if not more, responsible for the "tension". America offered to internationalise atomic energy and to dismantle her bombs, and Russia has persistently rejected her proposal ; yet America, not Russia, is blamed for the atomic arms race. Russia has 175 divisions, Eastern Europe about 60, China 250, while America has reduced her army from 17 to 15 divisions this year : yet America is accused of organising aggression through S.E.A.T.O. America is accused of blatant propaganda : nobody apparently regards China's germ warfare propaganda as blatant.

The attitude of the Indian intelligentsia towards America shows an ambivalence very much like that of the Chinese. China owes a great debt to America, and the educated Chinese were of course aware of it. Yet a few years of largely baseless communist propaganda after the war were able to mobilise the great majority of the educated Chinese in a campaign of bitter hostility to America. For the modern educated Asian America is the ideal : the first colony to emancipate herself, the strongest, freest, most industrialised and least imperialistic nation. But as the adolescent readily turns against his father, the admirer or follower is easily turned against his ideal. The great cultural gap between China and America made this reversal easy. The cultural gap between India and America is also wide, and the same party are making use of it, with the same false slogans, to achieve the same reversal in the Indian attitude to America, with the same advantage to their political plans. I believe that the irrational, baseless

hostility of the Indian educated class towards America is due very largely to the Indian communists' skilful exploitation of this psychological mechanism. For some of the communist propaganda is skilful, and their propaganda machine, by far the most powerful that has ever existed, influences the thought of great numbers of people who never meet a communist or read any of their papers.

I regret these false ideas about America, and the emotional revulsion of the Asian public against her, not because I regard America as in every way a suitable ideal for Asia, but because these reactions have political consequences which I believe to be disastrous. America has refrained, except in the Philippines, from imperialism, and for fifty years past has opposed the imperialism of the other powers. She wishes to continue doing so, and obviously she is the only power capable of defending the rest of Asia from Russo-Chinese imperialism. But if the rest of Asia turns neurotic and refuses to be defended, then it will be taken over and liquidated by Russo-Chinese communism. That is the danger all non-communist Asia now faces.

The interests of America coincide here with those of the free Asian countries, and there is therefore no reason to doubt her good intentions. But her policy has been painfully weak, and no doubt this has further assisted the revulsion of feeling against her. Her relations with Chiang and Mao during the Japanese war are a model for all time of what such relations ought not to be. Some important Americans favoured all-out support to Chiang; some proposed building up a

centre party ; some thought they could wean Mao away from Moscow by switching all support to him ; others, not without influence, wished Mao to win and yet to remain under the influence of Moscow. These controversies were never resolved, and the result was that American policy merely moved from blunder to blunder. She publicly identified herself with Chiang, but undermined him in secret, giving away his territory to Russia without informing him. She prevented Chiang from pressing his advantage and finishing off the communists when he seemed likely to do so in 1947 ; then refused him support and cut off his arms supplies when he began to lose ; stood by and watched him driven out of mainland China to Formosa ; and then in a panic realised her shameful mistake and identified herself with his cause once more.

She has repeated such vacillating policies in two later instances. After evacuating South Korea in 1949 she announced that she did not consider the defence of that country essential. When in 1950 Stalin ordered the North Korean army to march south, America realised her mistake and rushed to the rescue. After some vicissitudes of fortune and heavy losses she obtained military supremacy and was in a position to drive the Chinese out of the peninsula and unite Korea. But then she weakly allowed herself to be dissuaded by the neutralists and faint-hearts in the U.N., and concluded an armistice, restoring the explosive status quo in Korea, and enabling communist China to claim the advantage in the military exchanges, and consequently to obtain an enormous accession of prestige.

America's policy in relation to Indo-China has been almost as feeble. She consistently pressed France to grant independence to the colony, but France refused until too late, and power had passed to the communists. Alarmed at the prospect of a communist victory, she then supported France with arms supplies, and was henceforth branded as an ally of colonialism. When France became desperate she appealed to America for direct support, only to be told that the public were unalterably opposed to sending troops. As Lippmann bitterly but justly commented, her bluff was exposed.

In relation to India, on the other hand, America has refused to vacillate when she might profitably have done so. She offered arms aid on equal terms to India and Pakistan. Pakistan accepted but India refused. Surely this might have been foreseen, and the offer to Pakistan so worded that it could have been withdrawn without loss of face. Probably Pakistan will not misuse the arms ; probably America can prevent it if she tries. It may be that the aid to Pakistan, which is certainly needed, is worth while even at the expense of the alienation of India. But it is hard for one living in India to take that view. Since this event, next to Pakistan America has been the national enemy ; and if relations with Pakistan improve, as now seems likely, through a partition of Kashmir, America will be blamed and will become national enemy number one.

Even in India there are realists who see that without American support free Asia is doomed. But these blunders have disheartened many of them, and they tend to fall into line with the easy, popular neutralism.

VII

H-BOMBS AND WORLD REVOLUTION

There is a Gandhian strain in many Anglo-Saxons. I feel it myself, and together with my Radical Humanist friends it pulls me rather strongly towards neutralism. But I have never been able to dispel my doubts. I feel in pacifism something reminiscent of Pilate's ablution: a refusal to take the responsibility of decision, and a cheap claim to moral superiority. Except in genuine moral heroes, who are willing to face the extremest consequence of their decision, pacifism is a parasitic policy. A man can pretend to repudiate violence only if he is protected by people who are willing to use it and do use it enough to maintain order.

I am alive now because America possesses atom bombs and implicitly threatens Russia and China with them. If that were not so, probably those countries would by now have forced a communist government on India which would, among other things, have liquidated me. Not only I but very large numbers of people now living in India, including many pacifists and neutralists, who if prominent would be liquidated sooner or later, are alive thanks to America's nuclear weapons. But their position is inconsistent: they ought to disavow America's protection and trust to a communist government. Those, on the other hand, who prefer to be

protected by a threat are bound to agree to the fulfilment of the threat if the occasion arises.

We are now being told, and it may be true, that if nuclear weapons were used on the scale of a great war, the effect would be to exterminate humanity. This is certainly an awkward position for those who know what communism would mean and therefore oppose it. But I believe it is wrong to panic. Bertrand Russell has proposed that a neutral body should draw up an expert estimate of the likely outcome of a nuclear war in order to impress America and Russia. Such a proceeding is probably unnecessary. Both governments are as well informed on the point as any neutral expert, and accordingly both are anxious, as is quite obvious from their behaviour, to avoid fighting each other. The politics of the world struggle resolves itself into a two-sided game of bluff.

It is in this context that the neutralist policy must be judged. Neutralism rests on one or both of two arguments: either that the two sides in the conflict are equally objectionable, so that there is no ground for choice between them, or that, even if one is in a stronger moral position than the other, war will be so disastrous that such differences count for nothing. The former argument implies neutrality; the latter imposes an obligation to intervene and try to prevent the conflict. Government of India apologists use arguments of both types, and try to practise mediation.

The assumptions of both arguments are false. India is involved in the conflict, in the sense that if the communist powers win, she will be compelled to

embrace communism and submit to the total enslavement, terror and cultural annihilation which communism involves; whereas if the other side wins she will continue to enjoy her present freedom to decide what, other than a communist state, to make of herself. There is no ground for neutrality here. The argument of the mediationists is that large-scale war is likely, but mediation can hope to prevent it. But while each side is in a position to annihilate the other with nuclear weapons, war is extremely unlikely. On the other hand, if either side has decided upon war—and war will not take place except as the result of such a decision—then mediation will not prevent it. Even in the minor wars which have occurred recently, mediation was successful only after both sides had made clear their readiness to cease fighting.

Mediation is completely ineffective as a means of preventing war, and can never hope to be anything else. But it has in recent instances been effective for the paradoxical purpose of facilitating piecemeal aggression. In the Korean war the mediators and neutralists almost certainly saved the aggressors from a crushing defeat, which would really have established the principle that aggression does not pay. In the Indo-China war the neutralists and mediators prevented the organisation of a united opposition, and have arranged a peace on such conditions that the aggressor will probably take over the whole country without further fighting.

Mediation appears plausible only if certain false assumptions are made about the nature of the dispute and the participants in it. Many people still talk as

if it were a dispute as to the relative merits of socialism and capitalism. If that were so, the mediator would have a good case and an easy job. Neither system exists in a pure form, and it is unlikely that anybody would be so dogmatic on the point as to undertake, or even risk, a world war in defence of his pet doctrine. Nor is it a war about managerialism, which exists on both sides, or colonialism, which also exists on both sides, or about colour-discrimination, of which almost all responsible people on the free nations' side are heartily ashamed. It is not even a dispute between democracy and dictatorship. The democratic countries are only too eager to tolerate dictators who will refrain from interfering with them. If it were merely a question of the form of government in Russia and China, nobody outside the frontiers of those countries would have more than an academic interest in it.

The dispute arises because the men who rule Russia and China are determined to extend their control over the rest of the world, and now wield such power and possess such effective means of extending their control that every other country, however powerful, is immediately or ultimately in danger. Moreover their control of another country, or indeed of their own countries, is a disaster in no way comparable to the traditional foreign conquest, which almost all countries have endured at one time or another and survived. It does not make much difference whether communism is overtly foreign, or nominally indigenous, or genuinely indigenous: the policy is the same. The policy is the destruction of the existing culture, except

some arty-crafty frills which do not matter, to make way for what the communists believe is the destined culture of the future, the mass or slave culture of industrialism. The process is extremely ruthless, and involves the physical liquidation of huge numbers of those subject to it, especially of those educated in traditional ideas, but of course of vast numbers of ordinary people also. This policy has been enforced in Russia for 37 years, at a cost of scores of millions of lives. It was extended to eastern Europe nine years ago, and at least two million people have already perished. It has been enforced in China for five years, and the number liquidated certainly amounts to several millions. It can safely be said that in times of peace, not in war or civil war, the communist enterprise has already cost fifty million lives.

I propose to quote two witnesses who have lived in eastern Europe under communism. The first is a fairly well known Polish publicist named Joseph Mackiewicz : "I have lived under both the Stalinist and the Nazi occupations, and when I arrived abroad and my compatriots inquired regarding the differences between the two occupations, my reply was : 'The Germans caused us to become heroes, the Bolsheviks—dirt.' Such was the extent of the fundamental difference in both the methods and the inner essence of the two hostile powers, as it appeared to me. And yet one thing they had in common which separated them from all other states—totalitarianism, and its consequences. In spite of this, the relationship of Nazi to Stalinist totalitarianism was, if I may say so, that

of a tiny toy elephant to a hundred year old elephant bull in the African bush. This fact must be honestly recognised despite all the horrors of the German concentration camps because what is involved, above all, is not differences in the sphere of physical force but in spiritual methods of extermination.... The general impression I retained of the Nazi occupation was one of continuous shouting, screaming and shooting. By contrast, the impression of Stalinist domination in the long run was one of—dead silence.”

The other witness is the Rumanian anthropologist and Sanskritist Mircea Eliade: “Already by 1948, 30,000 books had been banned in Rumania; all libraries had been purged, cultural institutions closed down, foreign language teaching in effect forbidden, Russian taught from the lowest classes, nothing but drab translations from Russian in the shops, only Russian plays in the theatres. Roumanian literature consists of poetry reduced to political slogans, a pale imitation of the latest Stalin Laureate, novels called neo-realistic, in imitation of the court flattery prevalent in Moscow, bad translations of the Marxist ‘classics’, and that is all. Roumanian culture is on the point of disappearing as an authentic spiritual phenomenon. The spiritual emasculation of a whole people: it is a terrible novelty, even in countries which have known much terror. Though continually terrorised by history, all the Balkan peoples have preserved their own spiritual traditions. So much the more criminal is the sterilisation of their young cultures which is now being completed behind the iron curtain.”

In a dispute of this character can a third party hope to mediate effectively? The great example which Indian leaders aspire to imitate is of course Gandhi's. I mean no disparagement of his work when I point out that his success was only partial, and that the cases are not closely similar. In the dispute with Britain, Gandhi was the leader of one side, and he led a mighty power, the power of the 30 crores of Indians, against a few score thousand British troops and civilians. In effect Gandhi said: If you don't come to terms with me, you face those thirty crores. Even so, he took nearly thirty years to obtain his success; it is quite possible that equal success could have been achieved by constitutional means, given a leader of comparable stature, a Gokhale, a Tilak, or a C. R. Das; and in the end he did not achieve what he aimed at. He wanted a quite different kind of Swaraj* but had to accept a British-type constitution closely modelled on the Government of India Act of 1935. As for the Muslims, he achieved some local and partial successes with them, usually by fasting to restrain rioters, but in the great struggle over the partition of India he failed.

This is not encouraging, for in both those struggles he was opposed by people who at least professed to be guided by ethical principles and doubtless were so in some degree. The communists acknowledge no ethical system or principle at all, except loyalty to the Russian leader. They have nothing but amused contempt for Gandhi and all his ideas. They interpret any act or

* Indian word for "self-rule."

expression of good will as a sign of weakness. They recognise only two parties to the world conflict. A neutral is merely one of the enemy detached from his ranks, to be welcomed because his defection makes the task of destroying both of them easier. It seems clear that the practical effect of mediation hitherto has been a weakening of the precarious unity of the free countries and a smoothing of the path of communist expansion.

The mediationist's or neutralist's case is that these results occur only in the short term. Gandhi took thirty years to free India ; we must rely on a prolonged display of goodwill gradually to convince these embittered men that genuine goodwill is possible. The more realistic add that we must expect the privileged class in the communist countries to behave as privileged classes do elsewhere and prefer a peaceful enjoyment of their privileges to the strains and risks of further foreign adventures ; and that we can count upon an eventual split between the rulers of Russia and China.

The strongest part of this argument is its reliance on time. It is true that nobody knows what will happen, and it is perfectly possible that things will not be as black as the pessimists expect. On the other hand, it is perfectly possible that they will be blacker. Forty years ago nobody did and nobody could have predicted the fearful disasters that have overtaken the world since then. I personally fail to detect any lightening of the clouds.

The expectation that the Soviet ruling class will begin to tire of conquest and hanker after the fleshpots

entirely on its own initiative seems to me a flimsy hope. If we can judge from historical analogies, it will be many decades yet before any such change comes about. The Soviet zeal for conquest remained concealed through the twenties and thirties, but proved to be undiminished in the forties. The process of selection of the upper elite in the Soviet system is not such as to put power into the hands of easy-going hedonists. It seems to be an exceptionally rigorous selection for ambition and ruthlessness. Nor can we overlook the effects of the extremely thorough indoctrination they go through.

Most of all we have to take into account their judgement of the outer world. If the free nations behave feebly and show that they cannot unite even for self-preservation, the communist elite will be encouraged in their belief that "capitalism" is irretrievably decadent. If the free nations make communist expansion easy, communism will continue to expand. If on the other hand the free nations show unmistakably that further attempts at conquest will bring devastating counter-attacks, they may begin to think of other ways of spending their time. Since 1945 the free nations have shown such weakness and disunity that every thinking communist in Russia and China must be firmly convinced that world conquest is perfectly feasible, and that it can probably be achieved by subversion, pressure tactics and diplomacy. In that situation, no amount of goodwill on the part of mediators or any other prospective victims will cause them to change their minds.

The fall of Malenkov is the most recent demonstration that reconciliation with the Soviet is impossible. Under Malenkov the Russian propagandists increased their demands for "co-existence" and "relaxation of the tension". After Stalin's death the system passed through a great political crisis, in addition to its permanent economic crisis. The peaceful pose was therefore in no way surprising. But simultaneously Soviet diplomacy was active in trying to break up the Western alliance by drawing Germany or France or both to its side, and its failure to do so led to the fall of the pacific Malenkov, the rise to power of a military group, and the adoption of a huge programme of increased armament. Nevertheless Russia is in no danger from the West. The proposed rearmament of West Germany will but slightly mitigate the immense inferiority in strength of the Western alliance. To the communists "co-existence" means that the rest of the world must remain at their mercy.

The wishful talk hopefully of a split between Russia and China. The chances of such a split seem to me slight. The idea that China can be bought out of the alliance by trade or loans is childish. The Chinese communists are not nationalists. They habitually exploit nationalist sentiment in their public, but they are not moved by it themselves. The communist theory is strongly opposed to nationalism. The Comintern adopted nationalist slogans, purely as a matter of tactics, in the thirties and forties. Doubtless some communists, like other men, can persuade themselves with their own propaganda, but such a thing can hardly

happen to the rigorously disciplined and indoctrinated party, in the absence of solid cause. Russian greed and high-handedness supplied such cause to the Yugoslav party, it is true. China, however, is in a very different position. The ambitious Tito wanted a bigger place in the world communist hierarchy than the importance of his country justified. Russia was very hard-pressed economically at the time, and looted all her new colonies mercilessly. Moreover she had no atom-bombs then, so that the prospects of world conquest cannot have looked very bright. None of these obstacles to smooth co-operation in world conquest hampers the Chinese. The Russians have probably learnt manners, at least, from Tito's lesson, and we have evidence that they have been careful to link the Chinese party and government to their own in a variety of ways.

But again the decisive condition will be the political behaviour of the free nations. If we continue to make conquest easy for them, there is no reason why they should quarrel about it : they will go happily ahead to their glorious destiny of ruling the world, and will postpone the question who is to be the eventual boss till it arises. If we make conquest difficult or expensive for them, their thoughts may begin to take other directions, and in particular the Chinese may ask themselves why they should run these risks in order to seat some Russian on the throne of the world. It seems to me, in opposition to the prevalent view, that the best way to promote a split between Russia and China is to put up the stiffest possible resistance to their plans of joint conquest, and that the least hopeful way is to make

their path of expansion easy by our present policy of appeasement. I am glad to find that no less an authority than Franz Borkenau takes exactly this view. "In the face of the West's capitulation at Geneva," he writes, "all antagonisms within the communist bloc became meaningless. The left and right wings of the Chinese leadership had differed over the alternative of expansion abroad or social transformation at home; but if expansion could be got without a fight, why go on arguing? The left and right wings in Moscow had differed over whether the West might be more easily bullied by threats, or seduced by offers of 'peace'; but with the West no longer resisting, the problem became meaningless. Moscow and Peking had differed over the right mixture of aggressiveness and conciliation to apply in dealing with the West; but when they both promptly got what they wanted their differences, too, became pointless.... Russo-Chinese co-operation today is closer than ever, in no small part because of the mistakes made by the West. The mistakes have been due not to the West's uncompromising firmness or diplomatic 'rigidity' in countering communist aggression, but in almost every case to unwise concessions and flaccidity of purpose."

Am I, then advocating a policy which would increase the risk of H-bomb war? I should be very unwilling to do so, but the policy I advocate is less risky in this respect than the policy at present pursued by the non-communist powers.

The situation as I see it is this. The communists now occupy a huge area, four times that of the United

States, with five times the population, vast resources, and immense strategical advantages. The country and people are ill-developed at present, but by the communist method of forced industrialisation they can be built up in ten or twenty years into a military power of overwhelming strength. Communism hitherto has been devoted above everything else to military purposes, and it has done its job well. That is a large part of the explanation why its economic performance has been so disappointing from the standpoint of the consumer. By the purely economic or quantitative test of rate of increase of output, communism can hold its own with capitalism at its best. Thus America and one or two other countries may increase their total output as rapidly as Russo-China, but they will not increase their military strength so fast. In twenty years Russo-China will possess unchallengeable military superiority to the rest of the world. It is surely imprudent to permit the rise of this super-power, in the hands of men who have given the world ample warning that they intend to misuse it. All they will need to do is to address ultimatata to the other countries and compel them to submit on pain of extinction.

There are people who draw from this an argument for preventive war now, while America may still possess such superiority in technology that she might win. There have never been many who argue thus, and their number decreases as America's margin of superiority declines. We may take it that in the absence of grave provocation by Russo-China, there will be no preventive war.

Is any substitute for preventive war possible? There are two main lines of thought, not incompatible with each other. The first argues that America and the other relatively prosperous countries export capital, technical aid, etc., on the scale of their war expenditure, to the backward countries, so that the prosperity of the rest of the world may increase rapidly and thus defeat politically the Russo-Chinese effort to dominate the world by military power.

I fervently hope that Messrs. Stringfellow Barr and Lewis Mumford succeed in persuading their government to adopt this plan. But even if it is adopted, I shall place no great confidence in it. Raising the standard of living of these backward countries is a highly complex job, and their political reactions to the attempt to do it are unpredictable. There would be an immense amount of leakage, friction, dislocation, discontent. The effort would quite possibly make little difference to people's daily comfort for many years. Even if it were to succeed in that respect, nobody would be grateful: all the American billions poured into Europe since the war, with their immense beneficial effect, have only made America more hated than ever.

There are further reasons for my doubt about this economic programme. The main drive of the Russo-Chinese leaders is for military power. China now has conscription and will soon have a standing army of 20 million. A little more rice in the stomach is no answer to that. But the Russo-Chinese leaders also depend on the political attractiveness of their system for those outside it, and a little extra rice is no answer to

that, either. For the attraction of communism is not only economic. People sometimes say it is "spiritual". Doubtless it has an ethical appeal, if that is what is meant. But more important is that communism seems to those outside its frontiers to be thrilling, whereas life under capitalism is dull. There is no such difference in fact : so far as can be judged, life under communism is even duller than ours. But the apocalyptic Marxian theory, the enthusiastic propaganda of the Soviet votaries, the iron curtain, and even the hostile propaganda of critics, combine to give a feeling that something immensely exciting is going on there. No economic aid, no extra rice, is likely to make any difference to that. The richer countries ought to aid the poorer, and I hope they do so, on a far greater scale than they are doing now ; but they should have no illusions that it will stop communism.

The other line of policy, which could be pursued at the same time, is that suggested by James Burnham. If, as I have argued, resistance is better than retreat, attack is better than resistance. The free world ought to go over to the policy of liberating east Europe discussed during the last Presidential election in America but quietly dropped thereafter. Burnham gives reasons to think that the project of a counter-offensive is not so hopeless as appears at first sight. The Soviet system seems immensely strong, and indeed it is. But it is not free from weaknesses. It is like a strong shell covering a soft core : once the shell is cracked, the rest should be easy. Hitler cracked the shell, but then hardened the core against himself by offering the

Russian people a tyranny worse than Stalin's. The free world must offer liberation to the subject peoples, and also propose terms which reasonable and patriotic Russians can accept.

The substance of Burnham's suggested terms to Russia is abandonment of the project of world conquest, and practical guarantees that it will not be resumed. These guarantees should be withdrawal of the Red Army to the Russian frontiers, withdrawal from the non-communist world of the Comintern and the rest of the *apparatus* of subversion, espionage and murder, reasonable disarmament, a world authority for atomic energy control, and so forth. If the free world were to place such terms as these effectively before the few millions of Russian officials and technicians, and at the same time make it clear that any further attempt at expansion would bring H-bomb war, then there is some chance that a ferment would be set going in Russian society which in time would produce decisive changes. This political offensive, aimed at the minds of the subject peoples and the Russian intelligentsia, would not involve any extra danger of war. If we succeed in increasing hopes of deliverance among the people under the Soviets, and thereby shaking the stability of the system, the risk of war will decrease. The path of honour is also the path of safety. In any event the nuclear weapons are an extremely effective deterrent to war. What the free nations have not grasped is that these nuclear weapons are a powerful force of social disintegration, and one which can be made to operate both ways. Hitherto, they have been used almost en-

tirely against the free world. The H-bombs are tucked away in the American dumps, useless except for keeping the peace, and the Soviet bloc are using them most adroitly to destroy our civilisation. We should at least try to employ the threat ourselves.

I know that to suggest a policy like this is to cry for the moon—though when President Eisenhower was elected it seemed just for the moment that it might materialise. It may be, too, that America is no longer so far ahead technologically that the threat would work. But those who reject this policy on any other ground should think of the alternatives. Ruling out military attack, the possible alternative policies are an attempt to maintain the existing situation by threats against aggression, or surrender, piecemeal or sudden. The official policy of what is left of the Western alliance is to maintain the present position without any attack upon those who would destroy it. But such a policy for a democratic country, still more for an ill-assorted alliance of democratic countries, is difficult to the point of impossibility. Accordingly the policy really being followed is the third, viz. gradual surrender. But that is extremely dangerous. It can end in only one of two ways: after the gradual surrender has gone on for some time, either the remaining free countries will find themselves so weakened and demoralised that they must surrender also, or they will panic, and then at least there will be a real danger of an H-bomb war. The policy of a political offensive against Russo-China is actually less likely to lead to war than the present policy of piecemeal surrender.

Time is not on our side. The military strength of Russo-China is increasing more rapidly than that of the free world, and so far as can be seen will continue to do so. The able and ambitious leaders of world communism will not desist from their project unless the free nations confront them with some solid, convincing reason for doing so. We have given them no such reason, and in fact the evidence is that they believe world conquest to be possible within twenty or twenty-five years. The conquest of the world by the communists would be the most terrible disaster that mankind has ever suffered. Those who are still free must be warned, and must do something in time.

VII

NEHRU AND ROOSEVELT

I have had the good fortune to meet Pandit Nehru on three occasions. In Europe in 1927 he attended a meeting in Brussels of the League against Imperialism, and was made a vice-president. It was a communist affair, but included some other people like Fenner Brockway. Nehru returned to India at the end of the year and went at once to Madras for the Congress session, where he proposed affiliation to the League against Imperialism, and with Subhash Bose and S. Srinivas Iyengar formed the Independence for India League. I had a short talk with him one night, mainly about the necessity of abolishing the zamindari system.

A year later he attended the annual session of the All-India Trade Union Congress at Jharia, and was elected president. My recollection is that though the communist group put up a worker, or rather a railway clerk, against him, we were not displeased at his election. We did not regard him as one of us, but we recognised him as one who could be useful. The term was not yet current, or we should have called him a fellow-traveller. But at one of the meetings he showed his celebrated temper in a way we did not like : he rebuked a delegate for chewing pan.* Communists make a cult of working-class crudeness.

* Betel leaves and areca-nuts extensively chewed in India.

In 1934 Nehru was in the Naini Central Prison, Allahabad, when I was there, and I met him for a few minutes in the prison office. I was to be released shortly, and he invited me to his sister's house. Accordingly I stayed there for a few days. Mr. Ranjit Pandit and Mrs. Pandit were very kind and greatly eased the somewhat painful emergence from jail into the "duniya".* He was an enthusiast for yoga, and tried to teach me some asanas.†

One day he was talking about Jawaharlal as a future prime minister, and I repeated what was then the common opinion, that he was too much the student, the artist, the Hamlet: he had not the force of personality needed in a prime minister. Mr. Pandit in reply took out a photograph of Jawaharlal. It showed an expression which could be called resolute, but some might have preferred to describe as petulant, a determination to be determined rather than the genuine thing. I do not claim that this incident affords any profound insight into Nehru's character, but the idea it gave me is similar to that expressed far more unkindly by M. N. Roy in his pamphlet on Nehru written 10 or 12 years later, and sometimes I fancy that he pursues his incomprehensible foreign policy in the spirit of a determination to be resolute rather than a determination to be right.

It is of course the easy policy from the domestic point of view. Mediation or appeasement is the line which appeals more strongly than any other possible line to the national ego. It is enormously flattering

* The Indian word for "world." † Yogic postures.

when India's able representatives in the U.N. stand forth as the pupils of Gandhi and the world's foremost protagonists of peace, read polite lectures to the unregenerate militarists of the materialistic West, and receive congratulations all round on their noble work. If the position of Pandit Nehru and the Congress had been difficult at home, this policy might have been interpreted as designed primarily to strengthen it.

The part played by Mr. V. K. Krishna Menon in carrying out the policy of appeasement is more significant. For nearly twenty of his years in London he was known as a close supporter of the communists. People change their minds, but Mr. Menon's recent speeches do not suggest that he has changed his. I should guess that he is one of that considerable band of people in important positions in the free world who, though not technically party members, are in fact disciplined communists. Even if this is disputed, it will be agreed that there is something anomalous in a convinced partisan of the aggressor masquerading as a neutral mediator, and contriving so regularly to serve the aggressor's purposes. I hope people will not think I am suffering from a conspiracy mania : after all, communism is a conspiracy.

However, it would be absurd to ascribe the main responsibility to Mr. Menon. The Prime Minister is his own Foreign Minister and makes his decisions himself. I am not convinced that he is deliberately working for world victory for the communists, but sometimes I almost fear that it is so. In the international disputes of the recent past, with scarcely an exception, he has

exerted his considerable influence on the communist side.

Yet home policy and foreign policy are usually in accord, and his home policy is certainly not consistently pro-communist. On the contrary, democrats and libertarians ought to be thankful to him for the direction he has given to Indian politics in these first formative years. In form, and to a large extent in substance, India is a liberal state. The minorities are protected, opinion is fairly free, opposition is possible, the law is enforced, a consistent and reasonably successful effort goes into advancing the backward and poor communities and raising the general economic level. The Fundamental Rights and the Directive Principles are provisions of which any country could be proud, and they are not entirely eyewash. All this is due to Nehru more than to any other individual, not excepting even Gandhi. If he has been unduly lenient towards the communist party, it seems to be no more than self-confidence or an excess of liberalism. What will happen when he finally leaves office is another question: doubtless there is cause for disquiet. Within the possibilities of his situation he has worked consistently and well for a liberal democratic order.

A consistent democrat at home, and a consistent pro-communist in world affairs. The paradox reminds us at once of Franklin D. Roosevelt, and the analogy may help us to understand Nehru. There are many obvious similarities in the lives and characters of these remarkable men, and similar weaknesses too. Both show a passion for applause, excessive confidence in

their own judgement, a certain failure of intellectual effort, an unwillingness to think things out and to grapple with harsh realities, and a fixed dislike or suspicion, combined with an over-estimate of the power and stability of the traditional enemy. Roosevelt's traditional enemy was of course Britain; Nehru's is Britain, but he seems to have transferred his dislike, suspicion and overestimation of Britain to America.

There was a plausible case for what Roosevelt did at Yalta, but it seems clear that he overestimated the strength and malignancy of British imperialism, and though he was aware that Russia was an absolute dictatorship, he habitually ignored the world communist movement, and was naively angry when in the last few months of his life Russia began to go back on her agreements with him.

In a similar way Pandit Nehru seems to share the common Indian belief in the stability of the world order represented by America so that he feels free to direct all his efforts at criticising and hampering it. It is clear that he is familiar with communism as it was expounded in principle by Marx and Lenin, and considers that as opposed to capitalism it is progressive; but it seems probable that while he is aware abstractly that it is dictatorial and guilty of various other crimes, he has not understood in any complete way the frightful character of the communist regime, or the nature and power of its international conspiracy. This is not at all impossible. Not to speak of Roosevelt, there are many other highly intelligent and undoubtedly upright men who years after Roosevelt's death continued in

their state of kindergarten innocence about communism, in spite of close collaboration with communists. J.B.S. Haldane is an instance. Nehru has never seen communist politics from the inside ; probably he has seldom bothered to read the communist press. For at least 15 years past he has been so busy that his reading on many subjects must have suffered. He has obtained his information about communism from fellow-travellers of the *New Statesman* type, and from high-up communists, who will of course always have been on their best behaviour. That he is really ignorant about what has been happening in the communist countries is almost proved by his amazing eulogy on Stalin in Parliament after the great tyrant's death.

Stalin is the creator of totalitarianism. Lenin invented it, but he did so reluctantly : Stalin believed in it. He devoted his life to building it up, lovingly elaborating it, piling precaution on precaution, spy on spy on spy, as if to secure it in perpetuity against any democratic contamination. Stalin carried further than any other ruler in history the age-old method of unlimited terror in home politics. His record of domestic slaughter—between thirty and forty million people—is undoubtedly without a rival in the annals of the world. The monstrous Hitler is a child to him. He has the distinction of having wiped off the map several whole nationalities, with populations of lakhs or millions. His victims are not only anonymous masses, killed off in the impersonal way of the ruler, but rivals and former friends executed on his direct orders, in many instances after they had been reduced to complete im-

potence : killed not on impulse, but after years of waiting and plotting. These murders of former colleagues and friends number hundreds, if not thousands. In addition to many other international crimes, Stalin was guilty of at least two acts of unprovoked and carefully premeditated military aggression—against Finland in 1939, and against South Korea in 1950. And the attack on South Korea took place some months after the world communist movement had been instructed to subordinate everything else to the “fight for peace”. It is in the same spirit that this militant materialist and hater of religion had himself worshipped as the Sun-God. Stalin’s crimes would fill volumes. There is no more appalling character in history. Yet merely because, out of prudence, he opposed (and probably murdered) Zhdanov, who advocated an open military attack on Western Europe in 1947, Pandit Nehru, the heir of Gandhi, pronounced an enthusiastic eulogy on him and declared that he had been a man of peace.

People ought to be concerned not only about the damage the Prime Minister’s mediation policy is causing in international affairs, but about its effects at home. Manifestly these words and deeds are encouraging the communist party, and persuading innocent citizens that it is a normal and respectable party, for which they may safely vote if they like its public programme, and against which they need take no special precautions. The power of the communists at home is already considerable, and with this encouragement they will soon begin winning majorities in state elections. Then we shall be up against a real crisis.

Those who do not like the idea of being liquidated, of their national culture being stamped out, and of their children being brought up as communists, to murder or be murdered, must begin to do something in their own defence. The fear that they can do little, or that everything depends on international developments, is an error. We cannot know what will happen in other countries, but we can see what is going on around us, and we can change it. It is simply a matter of letting people know the truth. The Russian communists would never have won a fair general election after their first few years in power. The same is probably true of the Chinese. We must see that the inevitable disillusionment comes before, not after, the communists establish their stranglehold.

There is immense potential strength on the side of resistance to communism. Hindus, who at present tolerate communist ideas as they tolerate all other ideas, would unite to oppose it if they knew the truth about it. All those who prize any traditional culture, or any modern culture, or any of the liberties we now enjoy, have an interest in resisting it. It is more than a "political" question. Under communist rule everything is political: nobody is left alone.

I am not asking people to become fanatics, or to go totalitarian in order to oppose totalitarianism. The ordinary man's way of refusing to excite himself about such things is eminently civilised. But Hindus least of all people should need warning against supine indifference when the enemy is at the gate. There may be only a short time left. India is being led rapidly

and almost unresisting into, or at least dangerously near, the Soviet bloc; and the critical general election is less than two years ahead. It is time for the public to make up its mind and assert itself.

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